60 CDS REVIEWED & RATED!

First Look: Windows 95 Games

CD-ROM Today

November 1995

The Reviews Guide for Home PC and Mac Users

THE SMART GUIDE

Buying the Perfect Multimedia System

- 5 Reasons to Buy
- 10 Features to Look For
- 12 Great Shopping Tips

ROLLING STONES EXCLUSIVE!

Sneak Preview of Voodoo Lounge

Shop by ROM: 5 Catalogs on CD

20 Discs for Stocking Your Home Office

THE HOTTEST REVIEWS:

Encarta 96 vs. Compton's 96

My Make Believe Castle

Finally! Star Trek Omnipedia

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Windows 95 is taking the PC to the next level. A level that yesterday's monitors just can't keep up with. So to see all that it can do, you'll need a monitor that's up to speed.

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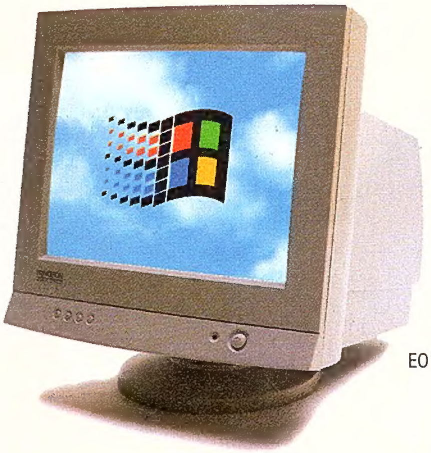

1280 X 1024. BY SUPPORTING HIGH REFRESH RATES OF UP TO 75 HZ AT 1024 X 768, EYE FATIGUE CAUSED BY FLICKERING SCREENS BECOMES A THING OF THE PAST.

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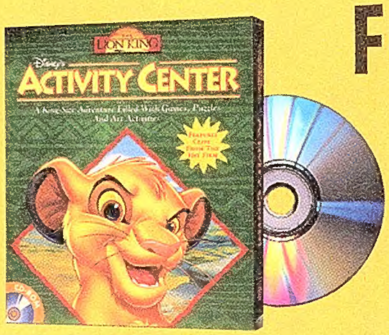
Product Information Number 170

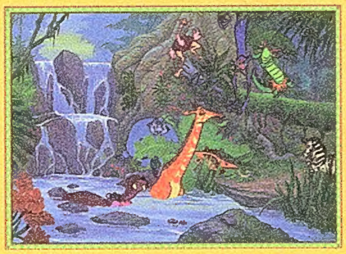
INTRODUCING A JUNGLE GYM FOR THE MIND.


THE LION KING
Disney's
ACTIVITY CENTER

Thanks to Disney's new interactive CD-ROM, "The Lion King Activity Center", your kids can play for hours on end with Simba and his friends. There are nine exciting and challenging activities, which inspire children to learn and use their creativity. As they master each one, they can increase the difficulty so they'll never run out of fun things to do. It's bound to be the best workout your kids will ever have.

Matching

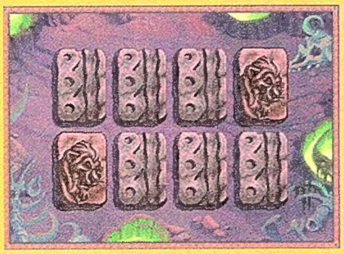
Art Studio



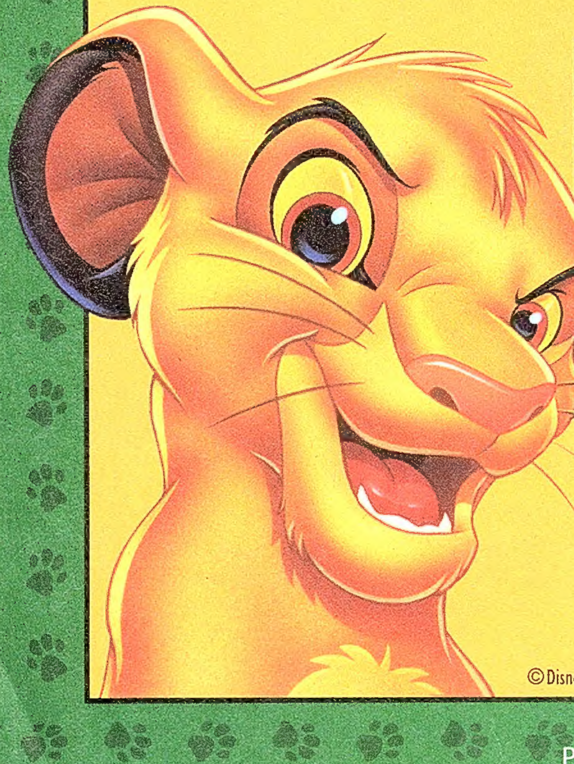
Hidden Animals

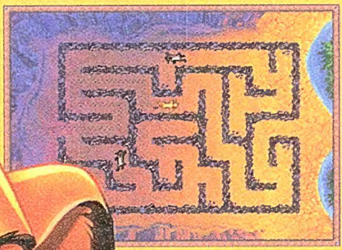
Music games

Puzzles

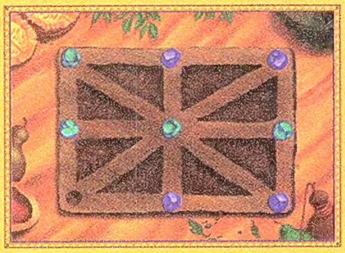


Memory





Mazes



Achi

CD-ROM for
Windows,
Windows 95, and
Macintosh

Disney
INTERACTIVE

A B C D E F G
H I J
O P Q R S T U
V W X Y Z
REPEAT

Spelling

© Disney

Product Information Number 117

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It's Only Rock-n-ROM

30 But we like it—especially when it comes to the new Rolling Stones disc. We take you on a behind-the-scenes tour of the *Voodoo Lounge* CD-ROM.

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Buying the Perfect Multimedia System

56 Looking to trade in your trusty old PC for a spiffy new system? Our no-nonsense guide gives you all the information you need to find your multimedia dream machine.

The CD Home Office

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Windows 95: Let the Games Begin

78 You've heard the hype; now play the games. We look at the new generation of Win 95 entertainment titles.

Let Your Fingers Do The Shopping

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About the cover:
Photography by Claire Arnaud, a premier photographer living in San Francisco.

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The Cranberries' Doors and Windows

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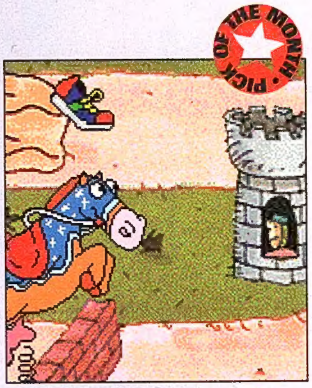

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My Make Believe Castle

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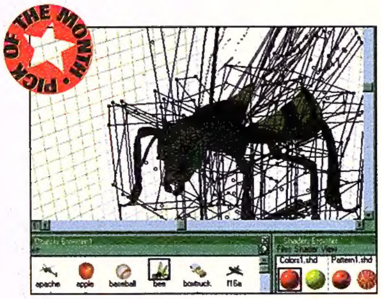
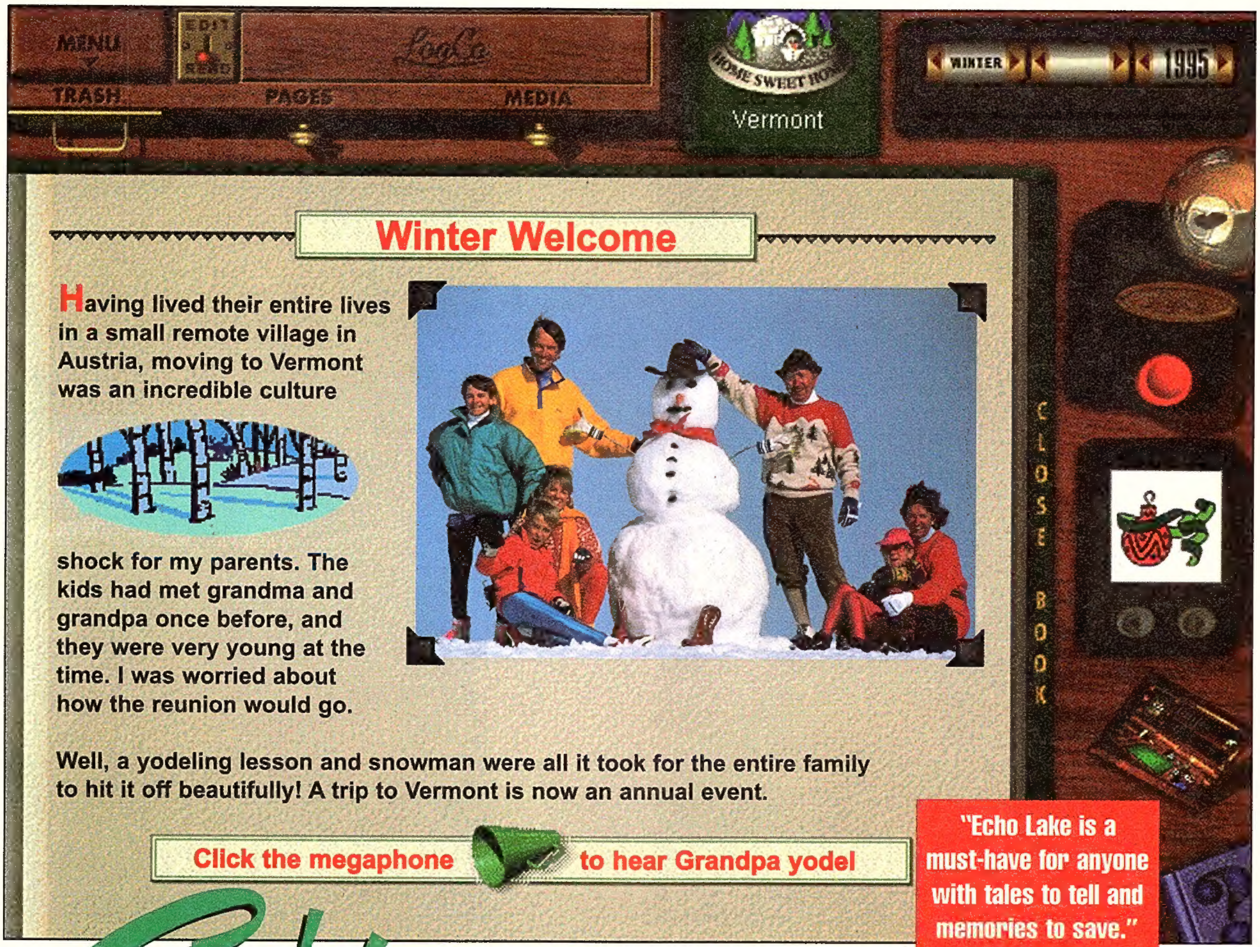
Corel Draw **pg. 173**





Winter Welcome

Having lived their entire lives in a small remote village in Austria, moving to Vermont was an incredible culture shock for my parents. The kids had met grandma and grandpa once before, and they were very young at the time. I was worried about how the reunion would go.

Well, a yodeling lesson and snowman were all it took for the entire family to hit it off beautifully! A trip to Vermont is now an annual event.

Click the megaphone to hear Grandpa yodel

> **"Echo Lake is a must-have for anyone with tales to tell and memories to save."**
> *PC Magazine, September 1995*

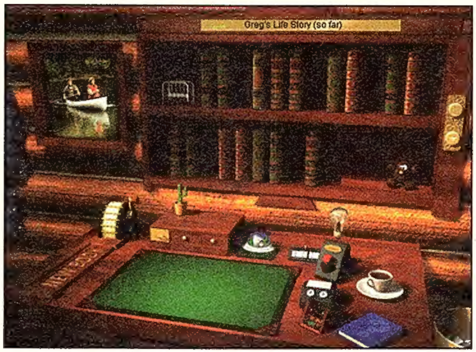
Echo LAKE™

Create a MULTIMEDIA FAMILY ALBUM from your own stories, sights & sounds

Echo Lake is the fun, easy way for you and your family to create a multimedia album from your own stories, sights and sounds.

The setting is a lakeside cabin in the country. Relax and pull up a chair. Simply point-and-click and you're ready to tell your story in simple, straightforward text, or enrich it through the use of photos, personal voice, sounds and home video clips.

You can even print stories into beautiful books or copy them onto diskette to send to relatives and friends.



Echo Lake's rich interface puts you in the mood for reminiscing.

Echo Lake makes a great gift for any individual or family with a home PC! Quite simply, it's the ultimate destination for your family this holiday season.

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Product Information Number 110

Photo credit: U.S. Navy air blast test, 1949/Courtesy UPI/Bettman

INTRODUCING THE NEC MULTISPIN® 6X CD-ROM READER. Once again, the leader in CD-ROM technology has broken the speed barrier. With a blazing 900KB/sec transfer rate and 145 ms access time, NEC's 6X readers have taken multimedia to an all-time high. Suddenly, you'll experience smoother video and animation than ever before. As well as

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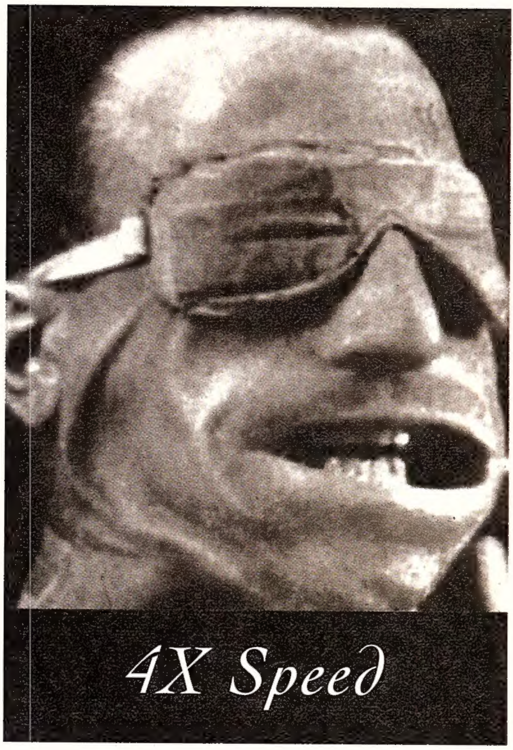

4X Speed

6X Speed

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Of course, our internal and external MultiSpin 6X readers come with all the extras you'd expect from NEC. A two-year limited warranty. Mac and PC compatibility. Unparalleled 1-800 number support. And NEC's exclusive on-screen interface that makes your reader easier to use. Even better, our interface kits not only come with SimpleStart™ software, they actually turn "Plug and Play" into a reality. For more about our new 6X readers, just call 1-800-NEC-INFO.

SEE, HEAR AND FEEL THE DIFFERENCE.™

NEC

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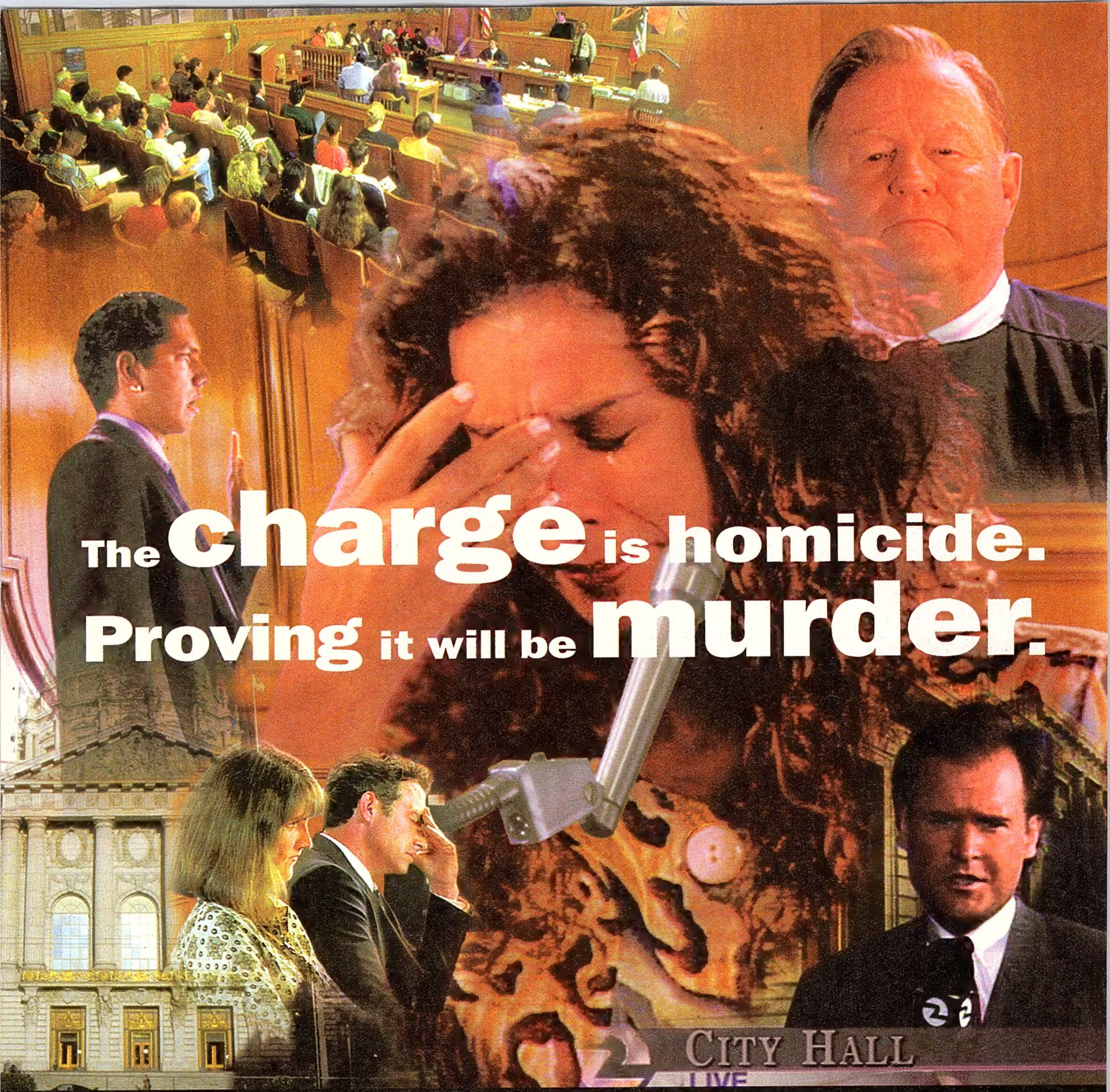
Product Information Number 162


The charge is homicide.
Proving it will be murder.
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You are the prosecutor on a shocking murder case.

Brøderbund

Some artists die for their art. James Tobin killed... or did he? As San Francisco's D.A., you must prove he did, in what has become the most sensational murder case to hit the Bay Area in years. Every reluctant witness and shred of evidence is required to paint a homicidal portrait as chilling and surreal as one of Tobin's own paintings. Call your first witness, Counselor. Can you prove murder... *In The 1st Degree?*™

Available for Windows® and Macintosh® on CD-ROM at your local retailer. Or call Brøderbund Software-Direct at 1-800-521-6263. Refer to code 714.

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Product Information Number 97

WITNESSES: DAY TWO
DONE WI
ART THEFT
GUN
Use love letter
Broderbund
Someone's Dead.
Someone's Lying.
Can You Prove
Murder One?
WINDOWS 95
IN THE
1st DEGREE
WINDOWS CD-ROM

CD-ROM Today
NOVEMBER 1995

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Thanks to Ingrid for typing in all the corrections!

Multimedia Go Home

Multimedia is everywhere. It's hawked on TV and radio. It's in the stores, from Software Etc. to the supermarket. It's in the air we breathe and the water we drink, and I swear I saw it following me last night on the freeway, driving a green AMC Pacer with out-of-state plates.

Multimedia may also be driving you crazy trying to satisfy its insatiable appetite for hardware. (Witness the editor on this page, having a nervous breakdown.) Are you beginning to sense that the latest CD-ROMs have outgrown your computer's ability to handle them? You're not alone.

Multimedia pushes PCs to the brink—and sometimes beyond. If you're trying to decide whether to junk your old clunker for a sporty new model, we have news for you: Things have changed since the last time you bought a computer. Your choices are now more abundant—and confusing—than ever.

That's why this month's cover story is all about how to track down the perfect multimedia system. Veteran freelance writer Michael Goodwin (aided by Reviews Editor Michael Brown) takes you on a trek through the happy hardware hunting grounds. His amazingly complete report starts on page 56; in it you'll find answers to such nagging questions as whether to upgrade your old system or buy a new one, why you should buy a PC or a Mac, what you should look for, where to go shopping, and how to wrangle the best deal.

Of course, there's only one reason to drop $2,000 or more on a hunk of electronics: the cool stuff you can run on it. Witness this month's *Disc*. Besides the usual complement of cutting-edge programs, our November demo derby features excerpts from three big-name performers who have taken their act to CD-ROM: The Cranberries, Sting, and the Rolling Stones.

Along with the hot demos you'll find some equally hot editorial coverage. To wit: We sent News Editor Doug Lombardi to the trés hip LA manse where a crew of engineers was frantically putting the finishing touches on the Stones' *Voodoo Lounge CD-ROM*. His behind-the-scenes look opens our News section on page 30. Look a few pages further and you'll also find his preview of Sting's *All This Time* (page 43), followed closely by a review of the Cranberries' *Doors and Windows* enhanced CD (page 46).

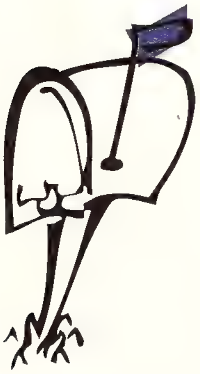
You say you just need a new PC to get a little work done? Then you'll want to read Kathy Yakal's "The CD Home Office," which gives you the inside skinny on 20 discs that help you get down to business, even if you've traded in your power suit for a bathrobe and slippers. Perhaps a better reason to buy a new PC is to run all those cool Windows 95 games. Jeffrey Adam Young's feature, "Windows 95: Let the Games Begin," ticks off 16 good reasons to make the upgrade.

Finally, as the holiday season approaches, we figured you'd need all the shopping help you can get. So we hired Contributing Editor (and shopaholic) Naomi Wise to take you on a virtual shopping spree with the help of catalogs on CD-ROM. Her conclusion: There's a lot of weird stuff out there.

Got any questions, comments, or complaints? How about a pithy caption for the picture of yours truly? Send 'em to me at cdromtoday@aol.com. The best one will receive an autographed glossy and a case of cheese whiz.

Daniel Tynan
Editor in Cheese

It's in the Mail



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EDITOR'S NOTE
CD-ROM Today reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length

For other contact information, see page 176.

WE DON'T NEED NO EDUTAINMENT

It finally happened. You took a very good magazine and made it irrelevant and uninteresting. *CD-ROM Today* used to be the first and only magazine that I read about CD-ROM software. I used to spend an hour with the magazine and *the Disc*.

I read your September "Edutainment" garbage issue back to front in 10 minutes. Only the *Michelangelo* CD-ROM review slowed me down.

I can't believe it. You have taken a solid publication and turned it into politically correct *Family Computing* and *Home PC* dribble. Yuck! How could you?

Peter Collins
Edison, New Jersey

BUYERS GUIDE: The Fastest drives alive!
CD-ROM Today
Edutainment
Is it hurting your kids?
25

WINDOWS 95

I have been reading your magazine for 10 months now and I would like to thank you for providing me with an excellent disc each month. What I enjoy the most is the shareware.

Do you plan to include any Windows 95 shareware on upcoming discs?

Alain Deschenes
via Internet

In a word, yes. You'll begin to see product demos and shareware for Windows 95 on future Discs.

HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?

I am an IBM user and have enjoyed your magazine for quite a long time.

I recently noticed the quality and quantity of your IBM software is decreasing. Are you publishing this magazine for Macintosh users only?

David Borton
via Internet

I love your magazine, especially *the Disc*. However, there is one thing I would like to change. I'm a Mac user and when I browse the reviews section I don't see many Mac reviews. Please tell your reviewers to do some more Mac reviews.

Jon Filbey
Mexico City, Mexico

Jon meet David, David meet Jon. Why don't you guys arm wrestle and let us know who wins.

SUBTRACT THAT AD

The advertisement on page 38 of your September issue is disgusting to say the least. I have raised two children, and if I found such violence depicted in what they read I would have tossed it. The type of violence depicted in this ad is neither necessary nor is it something that young people should be exposed to. What really puzzles me is how you could have missed seeing this ad prior to publishing it.

Ted Branham
via Internet

Our apologies for the graphic nature of this ad. Unfortunately, due to a production error we did not see the page until it was already printed. As a result of this ad, we are re-evaluating our policy on the kinds of ads we accept. Stay tuned.

SLIPPED DISC

It wasn't long after I bought my multimedia system that I discovered your magazine. So, I bought a copy and then subscribed.

What I found was one continuous headache after another. I cannot tell you how many times I attempted to load one of your demo programs, only to have the machine lock up or give me a DOS warning that the files could not be located.

In all honesty, I have seen some improvement with your product over the past year. But I am not satisfied. I am not cancelling my subscription because I am hoping that the improvements will continue.

Don Hatcher
Rome, Georgia

It's a difficult process to create a disc every month that works not only across a wide range of machines, but also three very different platforms (DOS, Windows, and Mac). We're working on improving the Disc's reliability as well as its content. In fact, we're in the process of adding staff and revamping the Disc's interface. In the meantime, we appreciate your patience.

SINK OR SWIM

Thank you for Derk Richardson's review of PADI's *Scuba Tune-Up Multimedia* (August 1995). However, judging from the images you published and Mr. Richardson's description of "jittery, grainy video clips" and "lackluster visuals," it seems obvious that Mr. Richardson used a 16-color VGA video driver to review our product, instead of the recommended 256-color driver.

We contend that *Scuba Tune-Up's* visuals are vivid, clear, and complement the quality of the product. We also believe that many of the comments in the review about our title, scuba instruction, and PADI in general are misleading. We feel Mr. Richardson could have done a bit more homework prior to writing his article.

Bob Wohlers,
Manager,
Educational Product
Development
PADI

Actually, our reviewer did use a 256-color driver in testing this product. Nevertheless, we retested the title using a 256-color card and a 100-MHz Pentium. Though the video ran quite smoothly, the colors in most clips were indeed murky and drab, as

It should not be this easy!

"In my day it took hours to do research. Now, my students type in a question, such as 'What is the smartest animal?' And Homework Helper™ does all the work. This complete online reference library searches the world's information...newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias, works of literature, reviews, radio and TV transcripts, maps and photos... for an answer in seconds. And unlike most online research services, Homework Helper has built-in intelligence that knows to look for articles on 'clever creatures' and 'intelligent beasts' as well. Oh, I understand the attraction...it has a colorful design... an easy-to-use interface. You can zero in on important information by topic source and reading level , I even understand why parents are using it. But don't just take teacher's word, take a FREE TRIAL and see for yourself."

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Infonautics

HOMEWORK HELPER™

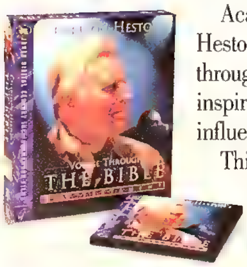
1995 EDITORS' CHOICE HOMEPC 100 TOP PRODUCTS

Homework Helper communication software is available on MPC CD-ROM only. Homework Helper uses the Prodigy Network Connection and requires an IBM compatible computer running Windows 3.1 or higher, a 9600 baud modem or faster, and 4MB of RAM. Homework Helper is a trademark of Infonautics Corp. When online Prodigy JUMP: Homework.

Product Information Number 139

Who better to lead you through the promised land?

Introducing *Charlton Heston's Voyage Through the Bible.*



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Product Information Number 145

reported in the review. As for Mr. Richardson's credentials, he has spent the last seven years as a research diving instructor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Maybe *CD-ROM Today* should review its reviewers.

INDEX, PLEASE

I have enjoyed every issue of *CD-ROM Today* magazine since I started buying it a year ago, especially the demos, shareware, and e-texts on *the Disc*. But locating material on older versions of *the Disc* is becoming a real chore, due to the sheer volume of material on each one and the number of *Discs* I've been accumulating. Can you come up with a database program for *the Disc* that catalogs all the "stuff" from the current and preceding issues?

A. MacGregor Robinson
Owen Sound, Ontario

We're already planning to include an on-going index of reviews and demos on upcoming issues of the Disc. *But thanks for the excellent suggestion.*

WHO'S RIGHT?

In your September reviews, *The Lion King Storybook* received a one-disc rating. According to your ratings chart, this means the disc would make a great coaster. Yet in the same issue, this program is listed as one of PC Data's Top 20 best-selling titles.

So, should I believe the factual proof of sales receipts, or the reviewer's opinion that the title is boring and completely uninspired?

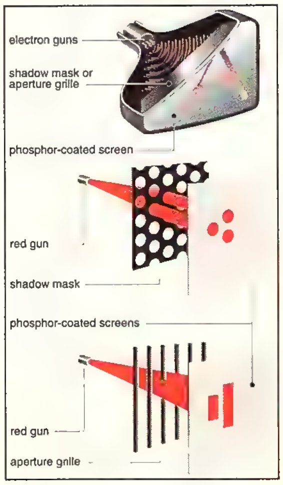
Maybe *CD-ROM Today* should review its reviewers.

Bob Solko
Cavour, South Dakota

Well, Bob, in CD-ROMs as in other things, popularity does not always equal quality. We review titles based on our own standards of excellence, not on how many copies a vendor manages to sell.

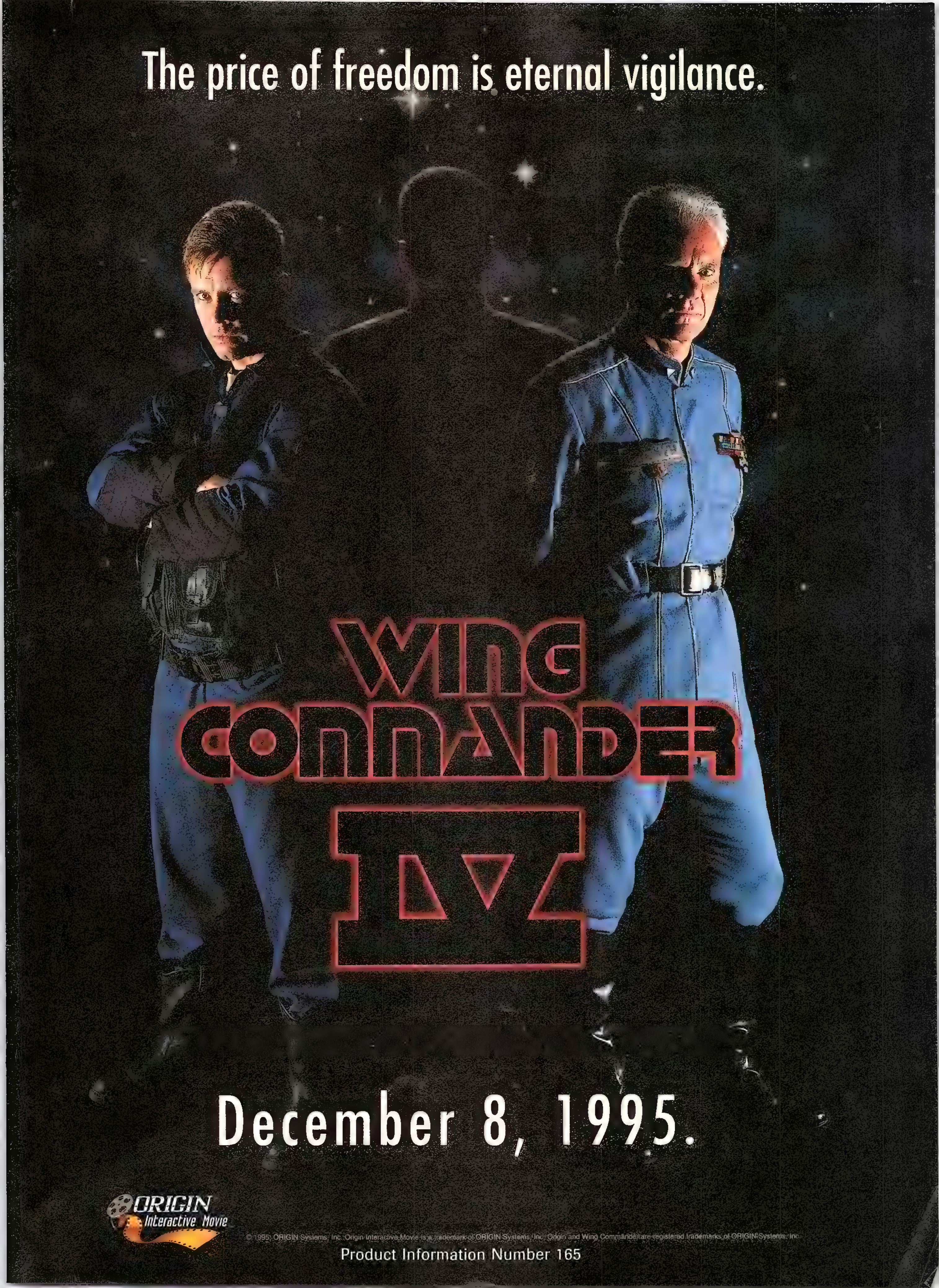
OOPS...

In our October Buyers' Guide to multimedia monitors ("Sight and Sound"), we neglected to credit the illustrator of the chart on page 58. The artist's name is Chuck Dahmer.



In our September 1995 feature, "Is Edutainment Hurting Your Kids?", we misidentified the publisher of AJ's World of Discovery as Discovery Communications. The title is actually produced by Western Publishing of Racine, Wisconsin. They can be reached at (800) 263-7123.

We wrote in our September 1995 news story "PCs Get Home Theater Technology" that speakers equipped with SRS surround sound decoding will not recognize recordings encoded with Pro Spatializer or Dolby Pro Logic. This is incorrect. SRS recognizes all encoded recordings. We regret the errors.


The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.
WING
COMMANDER
IV
December 8, 1995.
ORIGIN
Interactive Movie

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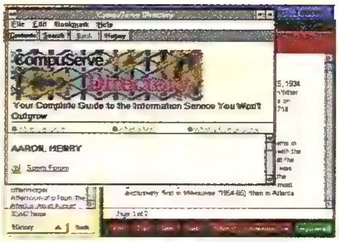
Product Information Number 165

The new 1996

Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia is so big it's a little scary.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File Edit Bookmark Help
Contents Search Back History
CompuServe Directory
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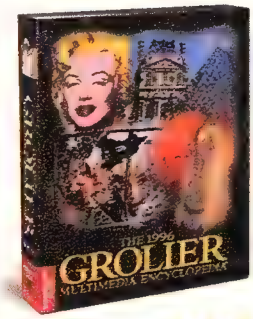
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Associated Press

"It's a winner."

New York Newsday

"Youngsters (and parents) will love it. Grade: A"

Minneapolis Star Tribune

"Use your mouse to become a construction expert ..."

USA Today

"...an interactive digital movie that lets children actually seem to control a steamroller, excavator, bulldozer or wrecking ball."

The Wall Street Journal

"...kids see what it's like to operate heavy machinery."

The Washington Post

"...they loved it ...the kids feel like they're inside a movie."

The Detroit News

"Next best thing to being behind the wheel."

Computer Game Review

Product Information Number 112

the DISC

#17

The disc is changing! And we want to know what you think. See the letter from our new disc editor below.

ON THE DISC

MS-DOS

Ascendancy; Caesar II; Cadillacs and Dinosaurs; The Need For Speed; MechWarrior 2

WINDOWS

The Rolling Stones; Sting; The Cranberries; Buried in Time; Tri-Tryst; Arcade America; My Make Believe Castle; Homework Helper; Digizine; CompuServe; Echo Lake; Crested Butte; Freshwater Fish; Our Times

MAC

The Rolling Stones; The Cranberries; The Beauty of Japan Through the Art of Sushi; Digizine; The Greatest Paper Airplanes; Crested Butte, Colorado; Big Job; Our Times; Dr. Iris' Seaside Adventure

QUICKSTART

For PC Users

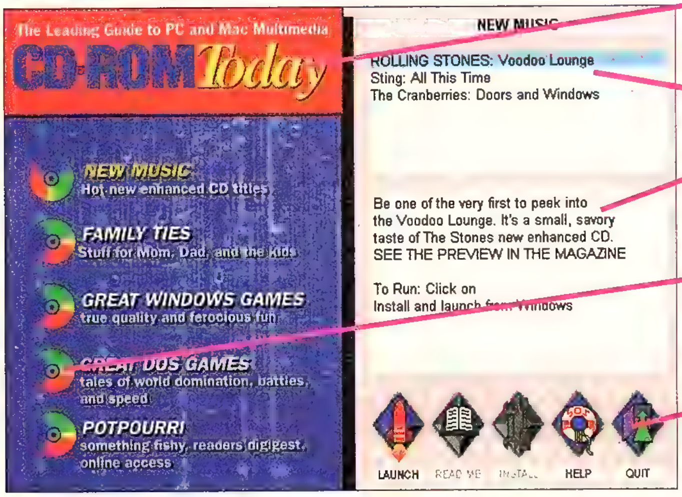
1. From the Windows Program Manager, click on File and select Run. In the Run window, select Browse and change the directory designation to your CD-ROM drive (usually D:/).
2. Select install.exe and click the OK button.
3. This will install *the Disc* user interface and place a new icon in a *CD-ROM Today* program group.
4. Double-click on this new icon to run the CD-ROM.

Note: Once installed, the same icon can be used to play future issues of *the Disc.*

Hardware Requirements for PC version (minimum): IBM/Tandy or 100% compatible; 386SX; SVGA (640x480, 256 colors); 4 MB memory; 2x CD-ROM drive; Windows-compatible sound card.

FRONT-END

Windows


The Leading Guide to PC and Mac Multimedia
CD-ROM Today
NEW MUSIC
Hot new enhanced CD titles
FAMILY TIES
Stuff for Mom, Dad, and the kids
GREAT WINDOWS GAMES
true quality and ferocious fun
GREAT DOS GAMES
tales of world domination, battles, and speed
POTPOURRI
something fishy, readers digigest, online access
NEW MUSIC
LAUNCH
READ ME
INSTALL
HELP
QUIT

ROLLING STONES: Voodoo Lounge
Sting: All This Time
The Cranberries: Doors and Windows

Be one of the very first to peek into the Voodoo Lounge. It's a small, savory taste of The Stones new enhanced CD. SEE THE PREVIEW IN THE MAGAZINE

To Run: Click on Install and launch from Windows

Click here for more info about *the Disc.*

Click on each program you wish to try.

Each demo or program is briefly described here.

Click on an icon to select a section.

Icons: When highlighted, these icons do the following:

Note: Maximize performance by running Windows in 640x480, 256 color resolution. Also note that the Windows interface is optimized to run in an SVGA video mode, rather than a VGA or lesser video mode. If you do have VGA rather than SVGA, the interface will still work without problems, but it won't have all the colors or some of the box outlines that are normally part of the system.

LAUNCH • Click on this icon to launch – or run – each program on *the Disc.*
READ ME • Select this icon to obtain more information about a program.
INSTALL • Choose this when setting up or installing a program.
HELP • This icon offers basic information about the user interface.
QUIT • Click on this icon to return to the Windows interface.

DOS

To make installing and running programs in DOS less difficult, we have created a front-end for DOS. To run, close Windows and type D: (where D is your CD-ROM drive). Then type GO.

For Mac Users

Put *the Disc* in your drive, wait for the icon to appear, then click on it.

Note: Many of the text files on *the Disc* are too large to load into TeachText or applications with restricted file sizes, like ClarisWorks. However, any major word processing program (such as MS Word or Nisus) should load and display them without difficulty.

Hardware Requirements for Mac version (minimum): 256-color Mac LC; System 7; 2x CD-ROM drive; 4 MB memory.

If Nothing Works...

We cannot provide technical and customer support for problems you may encounter with the many different programs and demos on *the Disc* Should your copy of *the Disc* fail to run at all, with error messages that indicate that your CD-ROM drive cannot read *the Disc,* please return the disc to the following address for replacement: *the Disc* Replacement, CD-ROM Today, 1350 Old Bayshore Hwy, Ste. 210, Burlingame, CA 94010. (Do this within the first two weeks after receiving *the Disc*) Please indicate what error message you received.

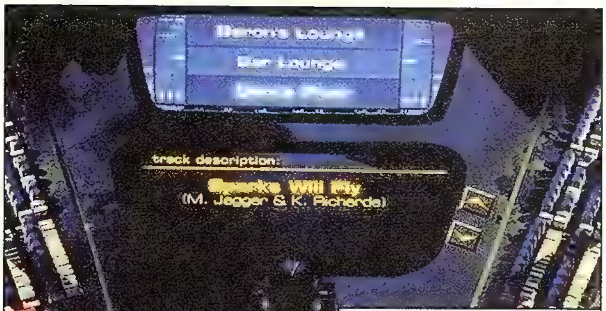
CAN WE TALK?

As the new multimedia editor at *CD-ROM Today* I'm spearheading an effort to reshape *the Disc.* We're planning big changes to bring you the most exciting, highest quality content possible. My first priority is to find out what you'd like to see and what you'd like to change. So talk to me.

For general commentary and suggestions please drop us a line at: DiscTalk@aol.com. For problems running demos or *the Disc* itself, send a detailed note to DiscGlitch@aol.com. (You can also fax us at 415-696-1678.) Given the large number of *CD-ROM* Today readers, we can't offer technical support for individual users. But we are firmly committed to bringing you the best possible content on *the Disc* and your input would be greatly valued.

I look forward to to hearing from you.

Kirk Steers
Multimedia Editor



▲ Songs, sights, and sounds await you when enter the Voodoo Lounge.

The Rolling Stones Voodoo Lounge CD-ROM

Looking for a good party? Then pop into the Voodoo Lounge. Once inside, you'll discover an atmosphere that is undeniably rock n' roll. For example, you can have a drink with Keith Richards and Ron Wood at the bar. Or better still, check out Mick Jagger in the ladies' room as he discusses the finer points of fashion with a few beautiful women. The highlights of the actual title are in the musical segments. Not only do you get to see and hear the Stones in action, you'll also experience rare footage of legendary artists who have influenced the band, such as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf.

DEMO: A collector's item featuring Mick, Keith, and Ronnie pounding out blues standards the old-fashioned way. The resident bartender gives you a few bits of advice and a Stones fanatic alludes to the essential VIP pass.

……

The Journeyman Project 2: Buried In Time

▲ Black tie optional: Time travel requires appropriate dress.

It's the year 2319 and you, Gage Blackwood (a.k.a. Agent 5), have been falsely accused of using your time traveling privileges to alter history. In this humongous sequel to *The Journeyman*, your sole mission is to prove your innocence and bring the true culprit to justice. The trouble is, he or she could be hiding in just about any century—hope you've got some time (approx. 50 hours) to spare! As you flip-flop through time in search of clues, you'll enter the worlds of key historical figures such as Leonardo da Vinci and King Richard the Lionheart. What better way to learn about history than to live it.

BRIEFING
RETURN

▲ Constant updates keep you apprised of the situation.

DEMO: This is one mega preview of different areas of the game with some major play time in Medieval England.

7th Level
(800) 884-8863
(214) 437-4858
How to Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

GTE Entertainment
(800) 483-8632
(619) 431-4264
How To Run:
PC - Click on Launch and Run from CD-ROM.
MAC - Open the Stones folder and Click on the MacStart icon.

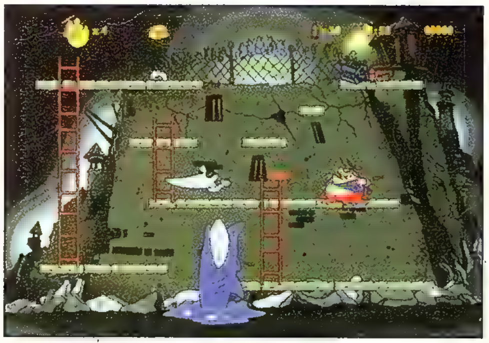
Vicarious
(800) 465-6543
(415) 610-8300
How To Run:
PC - Click on Install and launch from Windows.
MAC - Open the Our Times folder and Click on the icon.

Sanctuary Woods
(800) 943-3664
(415) 286-6057
How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows

Arcade America

Joey, the hero of this way-cool action adventure game, is a gruntin', nose pickin' slob who may totally gross you out at first. However, once you get to know him, you can't help but like him 'cause his intentions are good. After a practical joke goes bad, Joey's small army of pet monsters are scattered across the U.S.A. Armed with his trusty slingshot, Joey hits the road to collect his brood before they get into trouble. Keeping *himself* out of trouble is the real challenge. As he motors through famous places, such as Las Vegas and Alcatraz, Joey dukes it out with countless creeps. Electric shocks, falls from high places, head-thumps... you name it, it's going to happen. Aspirin not included.

DEMO: A fully animated introduction to the storyline, as well as a chance to test your slob-slinging skills in a few levels of the game.



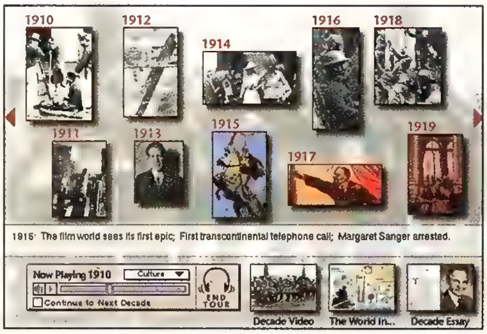
▲ Alcatraz is Joey's first stop in this bawdy adventure.

……

Our Times, The Multimedia Encyclopedia of The Twentieth Century

Our Times Multimedia Encyclopedia brings the history of the 20th century back to Technicolor-life. With this title, you can access thousands of charts, graphs, maps, articles, and images. The visuals are supplemented with rich narration by Darth Vader himself—James Earl Jones. Information management, via bookmarks and a Windows Manager (a clipboard-style window that tracks subjects you've viewed), has also been incorporated for convenience.

DEMO: An opportunity to review some of the historical events of the year 1940. Points of interest include the discovery of plutonium and the birth of John Lennon.

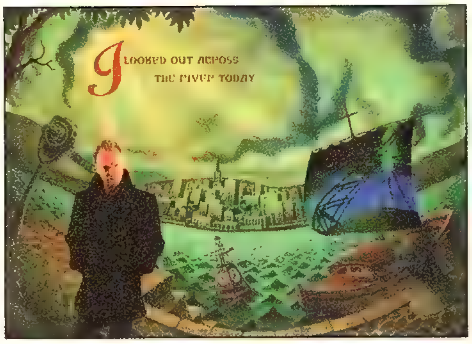


1915 The film world sees its first epic; First transcontinental telephone call; Margaret Sanger arrested.

▲ *Our Time* looks into each year of the 20th century.

Sting: All This Time

Sting's *All This Time* includes a series of interviews supplemented with rare, archival snippets of both television (e.g., "Saturday Night Live") and radio events. And there's plenty of music happening on this disc as well. As you experience the many environments of this title, you are invited into Sting's posh London digs to hang out and watch him do his musical thing. And that's not all! Sting also takes time out to give you a Tarot card reading.



▲ Sting chooses a medieval theme for this environment.

DEMO: A quick look-see at Sting in action with a few of his favored musical instruments. It also previews some of the other sights and

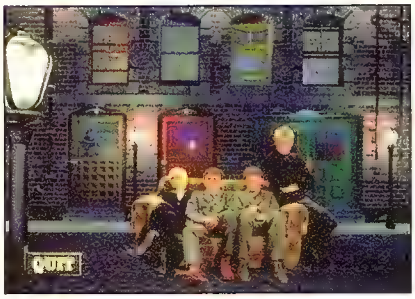
Broderbund

▲ Sting unplugs with friends in this video clip from *All This Time*.

……

The Cranberries: Doors and Windows

If you're anxious to get the interactive scoop on The Cranberries, your golden opportunity to "pick" up all the juicy details is here. Clicking on a series of doors and windows launches you into a variety of scenarios. For example, you can kick back and listen to the band tell stories while they enjoy a lukewarm beer in a local pub, or, listen to some of their latest tracks as you view their lyric sheets.



▲ Behind the doors and windows you'll find the Cranberries' world.

DEMO: Hear the band say, "Hello, we're the Cranberries!" a few hundred times as you get a sample of this enhanced CD's interface.

◀ The Cranberries do a lot of sitting around.

Electronic Arts
(800) 245-4525
(415) 571-7171

How To Run: Select the Launch button on *the Disc's* DOS interface.

Broderbund
(800) 521-6263
(415) 382-4400

How to Run: Click on Install and launch from Windows.

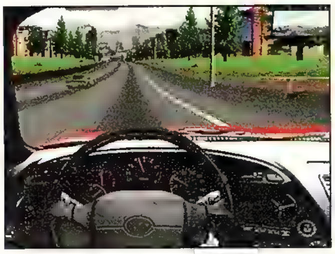
Spectrum Holobyte
(800) 695-4263
(510) 522-3584

How to Run: Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Phillips Media
(800) 340-7888
(310) 444-6600

How To Run: Click on Install and launch straight from your CD-ROM drive.

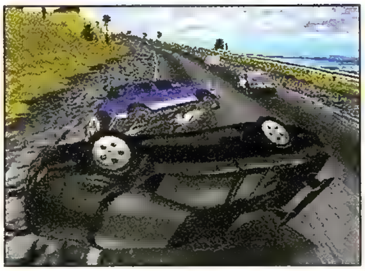
Road and Track Presents: The Need For Speed



▲ Keep the pedal to the metal.

Stay alive at 55" was definitely not the slogan Electronic Arts had in mind when they teamed up with *Road and Track* magazine to create *The Need For Speed*. Speed is what it's all about, and it's up to you to take advantage. The options alone are enough to make you dizzy. You can select from a wide variety of cars, including a Mazda RX-7, a Toyota Supra, and a Ferrari 512TR. There are four different modes of racing. One exceptionally cool feature of this title is the real-time racing cam that enables you to view the track from inside, outside, or above the car.

DEMO: Get behind the wheel of three of the eight available cars and take a test drive on partial segments of four tracks.



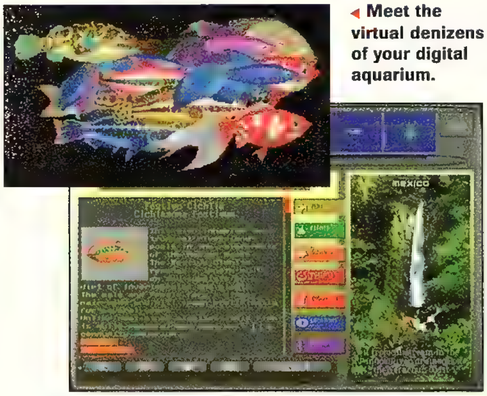
▲ The clutch is on the left, the brake is on the right!

……

The Nature Collector: Freshwater Fish

If you're still feeling guilty about that childhood pet goldfish who bought the farm, *Freshwater Fish* may be your chance at redemption. In this title, you play a fish collector in search of rare species to add to the museum's new exhibit—that's the easy part. Once you get these unusual guppies into captivity, you must make them feel right at home. You'll be surprised at how finicky these fish can be. To keep them happy, healthy, and alive you must work (by trial and error) to create and maintain a perfectly balanced environment.

DEMO: A brief audio introduction and welcome from a museum staffer along with a self-guided tour of the basic functions of the game.



◀ Meet the virtual denizens of your digital aquarium.

▲ Get the skinny on different species by dipping into *Freshwater Fish*'s database.

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Learn the skills you need to get the most out of Windows 95. It's easy with *Microsoft Windows 95 Fundamentals*, a new CD-ROM tutorial from NETG.

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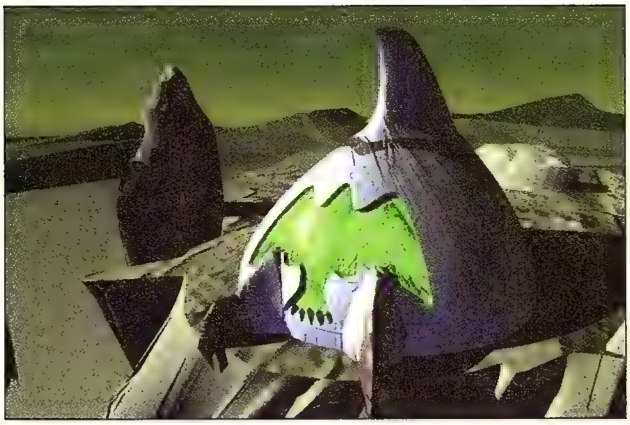
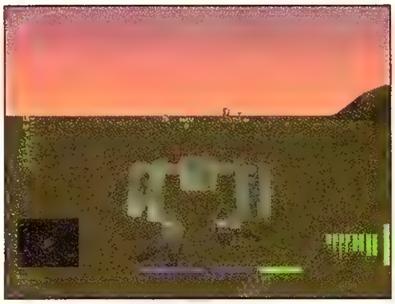


▲ Protecting Falcon Base – yours is not to reason why?

MechWarrior 2

MechWarrior 2 may be just the perfect source of fantasy revenge for the harried commuter—you get to sit behind the controls of a huge heavy metal fighting machine and destroy, destroy, destroy! There are 15 different BattleMechs to choose from and each can be customized to your specifications. Once your BattleMech is primed for action, you choose your mission. The Instant Action allows you to customize your missions and instantly go for it. The Career mode, on the other hand, starts you off as a lowly novice. To advance your standing, you must work your way up by fighting in numerous arena-style competitions.

DEMO: The demo lets you perform several full-scale missions.

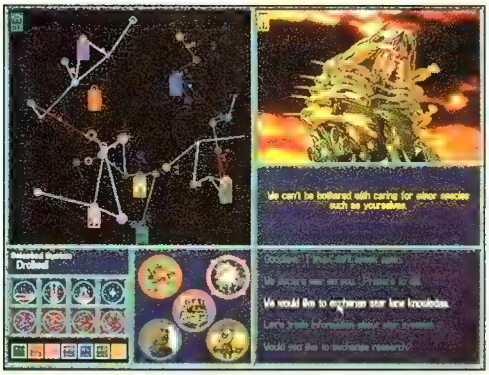


▲ The "Heads up" view from the cockpit.

Ascendancy

Feeling alienated isn't a bad thing when it comes to Ascendancy. In this strategy title, you climb into the skin of an alien and act as leader of your "new" species. The goal is to advance the culture and develop new resources. To achieve this you must develop and build spacecraft. Then, use the spacecraft to travel and seek out other alien nations with whom you can share information. Sorry, there's no "free lunch" in outerspace—you must give in order to receive. So, be prepared to tackle some cross-cultural barriers and schmooze your way through a few deals.

DEMO: The low-down on seven of the 21 alien species and approximately 555 "game days" worth of play.



▲ Deciding who lives and who dies is part of your climb to interstellar domination.

Discovery Communications
(800) 762-2189
(301) 986-0444
How To Run:
Click the Seaside Adventure icon.

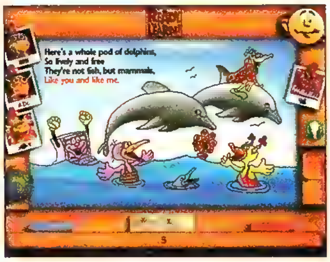
Activision
(800) 477-3650
(310) 473-9200
How To Run:
Click on Install in the DOS interface

Ahearn Interactive
(312) 494-9999
How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Broderbund
(800) 521-6263
(415) 382-4400
How to Run:
Click on Install in the DOS interface

Arome International
(916) 894-8407
How To Run:
Open the Sushi Folder and click on the Sushi Demo icon.

Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip: Seaside Adventure



Here's a whole pod of dolphins,
So lively and free
They're not fish, but mammals,
Like you and like me.

▲ Dolphins are among the many animals encountered on the field trip.

Kiddies can have fun in the computer-sun and learn all about what's up at the beach (minus the sunburn) with Professor Iris as their guide. Games, puzzles, music, along with a variety of other activities are all part of the fun, interactive curriculum.

DEMO: A little bit of point-and-click beach action.

Digizine

Entertainment

▲ Check out the Jesus Lizard!

Digizine is off to a wild and woolly start as one of the forerunners in the electronic magazine genre. The format is colorful and flashy, and there's a little something for everybody. For instance, if "Twisted Topics" turn you on, then you can look forward to a lively discussion about condoms. Then again, if you like it a bit more mainstream, you can check in on what's hot and what's not in the various sections.

DEMO: Snippets of information from the Twisted Topics, Entertainment, and Society/Culture sections.

The Beauty of Japan Through The Art of Sushi

▲ Sight, sound, and taste are all part of the sushi experience.

The Beauty of Japan Through the Art of Sushi is a tasty-looking cooking/cultural history title designed for both the sushi lover and the curious cook. Through real-time demonstrations from master sushi chefs, viewers can learn all about how to prepare, arrange, serve, and eat this artful delicacy. And if you prefer flowers to fish, you can also pick up a few tips on Ikebana—the art of Japanese flower arranging.

DEMO: A promo sequence that explains what topics are covered in the final version.

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The Surrealistic Adventure That Will Become Your World
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DARK FORCES
Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia

Title	Category	No.	System	CPU	RAM	Periph.
Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego Deluxe	Children's Ed	5016605	WIN MAC	386 Class.	4mb	M
Myst	Interact. Game	5004304	WIN MAC	386/33 LCII	4mb	M
Microsoft Bookshelf	Gen. Reference	5009402	WIN MAC	386 LCII	4mb	M
Microsoft Musical Instruments	Music	5012802	WIN MAC	386 LCII	4mb	M
Dark Forces	Arcade Style	5046503	DOS MAC	386/33 LCIII	8mb	M K
Compton's Encyclopedia '96	Encyclopedia	5046008	WIN MAC	386 LCII	4mb	M

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How To Select CD-ROMs For Your System.

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WIN MAC	386 LCIII	4mb	M P J K

SYSTEM Button indicates the available operating environment(s) for a given selection: DOS (for PC), Windows (for PC), Macintosh.

CPU Button indicates the *minimum* processor required. If a title is available in PC and Macintosh formats, the top half of this button represents PC system requirements and the bottom half represents Macintosh system requirements. Note: Ser.=Series, Class.=Classic, Pent.=Pentium. For Mac – LC series includes LC 475, Performa 475, Quadra, Centris, Powerbook 180C, IIFX or better.

RAM Button indicates the *minimum* amount of RAM required.

PERIPHERALS Button indicates required peripherals. M=mouse, J=joystick, K=keyboard, P=printer.

For all titles, the *minimum* system requirements recommended (unless otherwise indicated) are: Hardware: SVGA monitor (256 colors), sound card, 40MB hard drive, double speed CD-ROM drive. Operating System: DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1, Macintosh System 7.0.

Title	Category	No.	System	CPU	RAM	Periph.
Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing	Typing Tutor	5015102	WIN	386	4mb	M K
The Lost Mind Of Dr. Brain	Children's Ed.	5037502	WIN MAC	486 LCIII	4mb	M
Leonardo	Historical	5020003	WIN MAC	386 LCII	4mb	M
7th Guest	Interact. Game	5004700	DOS MAC	386/33 LCIII	4mb	M
Wings Over Europe	Historical	5029301	WIN MAC	486 LC	4mb 5mb	M
King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride	Adventure	5024401	WIN MAC	386/33 LCIII	4mb	M
Astronomica	Astronomy	5033600	WIN MAC	486 LCIII	4mb	M
Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia Of Sex	Home/Personal	5027602	WIN	486	4mb	M
Instant Internet Access	Internet Guide	5031000	WIN	386	4mb	M
Nascar Racing	Driving Sim.	5001300	DOS	386/40	8mb	M J K
AAA Trip Planner	Travel	5011606	WIN	386	4mb	M P
Jumpstart Kindergarten	Children's Ed.	5027701	DOS WIN	386	1mb	M
Doom II	Arcade Style	5021506	DOS MAC	386/33 LCII	4mb	M J K
PTS Official Windows '95 Tutorial	Computer Tutor.	5043807	WIN	386/33	4mb	M
Wing Commander III	Flight Sim.	5028907	DOS	486/50	8mb	M K J
Bodyworks Voyager	Medical Ref	5009709	WIN	386	4mb	M P
The Way Things Work	Children's Ed.	5028402	WIN MAC	386 LCII	4mb	M
Reader Rabbit 3	Children's Ed	5030606	WIN MAC	386/25 Class.	4mb	M
Full Throttle	Adventure	5046404	DOS	486/33	8mb	M K
Harry And The Haunted House	Children's Ed.	5034806	WIN MAC	386 CLASSIC	4mb	M
NHL Hockey '95	Sports	5007505	DOS	386/33	4mb	M J K
NBA Live '95	Sports	5035902	DOS	486/33	8mb	M J
Microsoft Cinemania '95	Video Guide	5012703	WIN MAC	386 LCIII	4mb	M K
Daedalus Encounter	Interact. Game	5034707	WIN MAC	486/33 LCIII	8mb	M K
Descent	Arcade Style	5046602	DOS	386/33	4mb	M
SIM Tower	Strategy Game	5046305	WIN MAC	386 LCIII	4mb	M
Corel Gallery	Clip Art Lib.	5010301	WIN	386	2mb	M P K
Home Repair Encyclopedia	Home Personal	5033105	WIN	386	2mb	M
Beer Hunter	Gen. Interest	5040803	WIN MAC	486 LCIII	4mb	M

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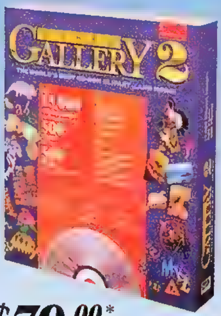

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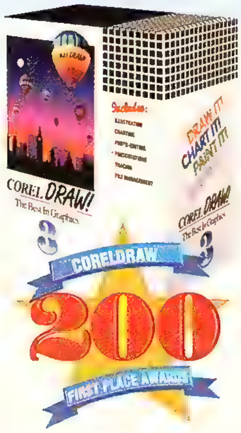

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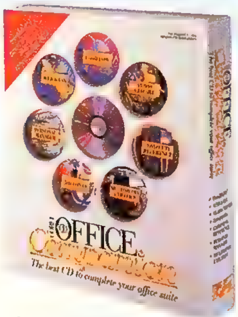

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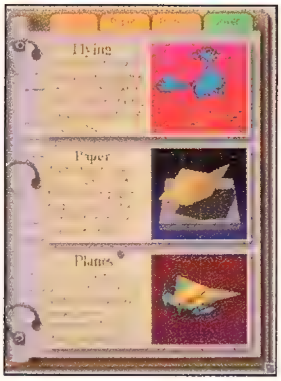
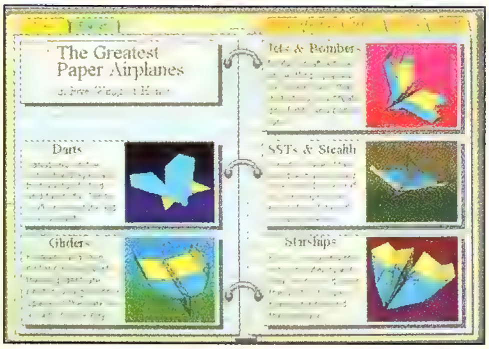
Start up your printer, grab a copy of *The Greatest Paper Airplanes*, and you've got the power of flight at your fingertips. Through the use of step-by-step audio and visual instructions, you can learn to create some of the most unusual and intricate paper airplanes imaginable—they really fly, too. There's even a bit of history thrown into the mix. For example, did you know that the Chinese began using kites 3,000 years ago?



▲ **The 3D animations are an excellent guide.**

DEMO: A brief interactive sample of how the full version operates, including how to fold an airplane.



◀ ***Master the art of the crease with The Greatest Paper Airplanes.***

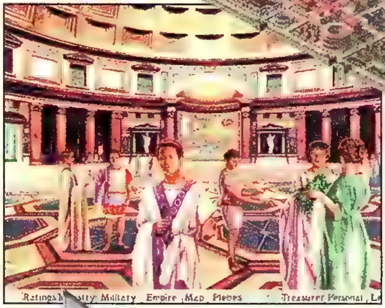
Caesar II

Hail CD-sar! In this *SimCity*-style game you assume the role of a Roman governor and set out to build your empire, with the hope of one day becoming the mighty Caesar! But life's not easy when you're the big Kahuna. Your citizens depend on you for everything, including education, entertainment, and protection from plague and riot.

MAP OF THE EMPIRE
Select a province for more information

▲ **Planning world conquest, like most things in life, requires a good map.**

DEMO: A good taste of what's in store by allowing you to build and expand for roughly 10 years of 'game-time' or until a population of 1,000 is reached.



▲ **Citizens, slaves, and soldiers can all be friend or foe.**

LCSI
(800) 321-5646
(514) 331-7090

How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Mindscape
(800) 234-3088
(415) 897-9900

How To Run:
Open the Paper Airplanes folder and click on the icon.

Infonautics
(800) 831-1440
(610) 971-8840

How To Run:
Click on RUN and launch from the CD.

DOS

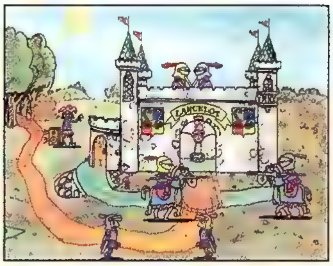
Sierra On-Line
(800) 757-7707
(206) 649-9800

How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from the DOS interface.

Discovery Channel Multimedia
(800) 762-2189
(317) 579-0400

How To Run:
Click on the Big Job Icon.

My Make Believe Castle

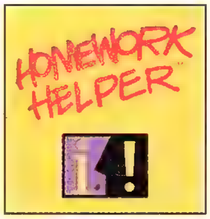


▲ **The approach to the castle gate is full of adventure and promise.**

My Make Believe Castle is a brilliant interactive education title for kids aged four to seven. Set in a colorful imaginary kingdom, kids are presented with a series of challenging sequences that include solving puzzles and navigating through mazes. Your children can also create their own animated sequences by selecting characters from a menu and dragging them into their favorite area. And, to satisfy the artist within, the tykes can even create their own family crest.

DEMO: Move in and out of various rooms inside the castle as you sample some of the animation features.

Homework Helper



Homework Helper is a fancy looking search tool that enables users to easily access all types of information via Prodigy. The nuts and bolts behind it are simple: you choose a topic (e.g., the Hubble Telescope), hit the search button, and wait. You then glean portions of info that you want to keep with the cut and paste feature. For extra back up, *Homework Helper* also includes a dictionary and a thesaurus.

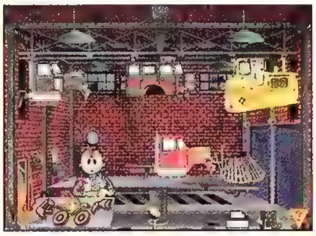
DEMO: An orientation and tour of the various features and one "free search" of any topic, compliments of Prodigy.

Big Job

▲ **Your adventure starts in the Big Job clubhouse.**

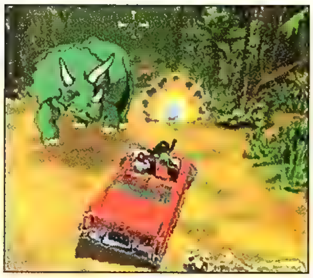
Children with a love for things that go clunk and zoom will love tinkering around in the *Big Job* secret clubhouse. Not only will they learn lots about heavy-duty machinery (fire trucks and tractors), they can also rummage around in the virtual junkyard and use what they find to put together BIG trucks.

DEMO: An interactive visit to *Big Job*'s secret clubhouse.



◀ **This Big Job is on the assembly line.**

Cadillacs and Dinosaurs



▲ Some dinosaurs are nothing but trouble

Life's a bitch—even in a post-apocalyptic world. Just ask Jack Tenrec and Hannah Dundee, the heroes of the comic book-style adventure, *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*. In this fast-paced action adventure, you assist Jack and Hannah by navigating their '53 Cadillac through a dinosaur-infested forest. Dodging Triceratops' tails can be a bit of a problem. But you've got to cope because your goal is to reach the nuclear reactor and disarm it before the greasy, greedy, politicians use it to threaten what's left of the world for financial gain. Hey, just like real life.

DEMO: Test your driving skills as you speed through a less-than-enchanted forest that's teeming with large reptiles.

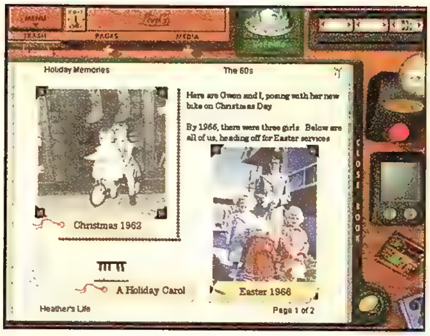
◀ Danger: Red attracts dinosaurs.

Echo Lake

David's Book

▲ Capture your misty water-colored memories forever with *Echo Lake.*

The road to recording family history is paved with good intentions. We all mean to do it, but have a rough time getting motivated, right? If you can relate to this, then you'll definitely be interested in *Echo Lake*, a multimedia authoring tool that makes cataloging family and personal history both fun and interesting. For example, you can create an interactive scrapbook by combining still photos, text, video, and audio clips. You can also create a journal and keep it private by locking it up in the password-controlled safe. If you're lacking ideas, *Echo Lake* also has a feature called the Inspirator, which is designed to offer suggestions and help you break those mental blocks.



Holiday Memories

The 60s

Here are Gwen and I, posing with her new bike on Christmas Day

By 1966, there were three girls. Below are all of us, heading off for Easter services

Christmas 1962

A Holiday Carol

Easter 1966

Heather's Life

Page 1 of 2

DEMO: An interactive how-to tour of the main menu selections and a sample scrapbook entry of a child's birthday party.

◀ Echo Lake preserves the sights and sounds of past vacations.

Virgin Interactive Entertainment
(800) 874-4607
(714) 833-8710
How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Rocket Science
(800) 987-2538
(415) 442-5000
How To Run:
Click Install from the DOS interface.

CompuServe
(800) 848-8990
How to Run:
Click on Launch and run the CD.

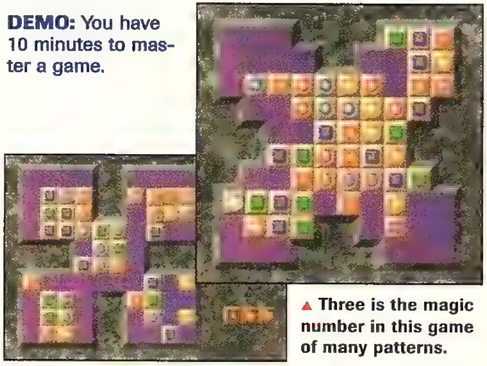
Delrina
(800) 324-6525
(408) 363-2345
How To Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Falling Leaf Productions
(800) 290-5864
How to Run:
Click on Install and launch from Windows.

Tri-tryst

Tri-tryst, a hybrid *Tetris* look-alike, is one of those highly addictive puzzle games that draws you in and never lets go. The goal is to match colored tiles together, in rows of three or more, either vertically or horizontally. Each time you make a match, surprise, the row disappears. *Tri-tryst* also offers three different modes of play (Strategy, Arcade, and Timed), and two types of competition (Classic and Arcade).

DEMO: You have 10 minutes to master a game.

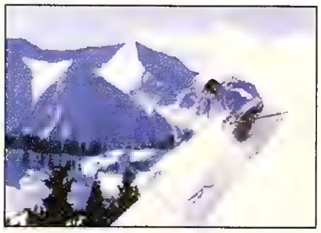


▲ Three is the magic number in this game of many patterns.

CompuServe

CompuServe is one of the more familiar faces amongst the growing family of online information services. Ranging from sports and entertainment to flight fares and 24-hour shopping, CompuServe also acts as a launch pad to the wide open spaces of the Internet.

Crested Butte



▲ Fear of heights or fear of flying, you can take your pick.

If you're shopping around for a new vacation destination but are hesitant to commit to the unknown, check out the *Crested Butte* interactive CD-ROM. Get a taste of the Rocky Mountain high-life via a menu-driven tour that includes video footage of extreme skiing, maps, pricing lists, menu offerings from local restaurants, and more.

DEMO: A basic introduction to what's available at the Crested Butte ski resort.

▲ Point your skis downhill, and go!

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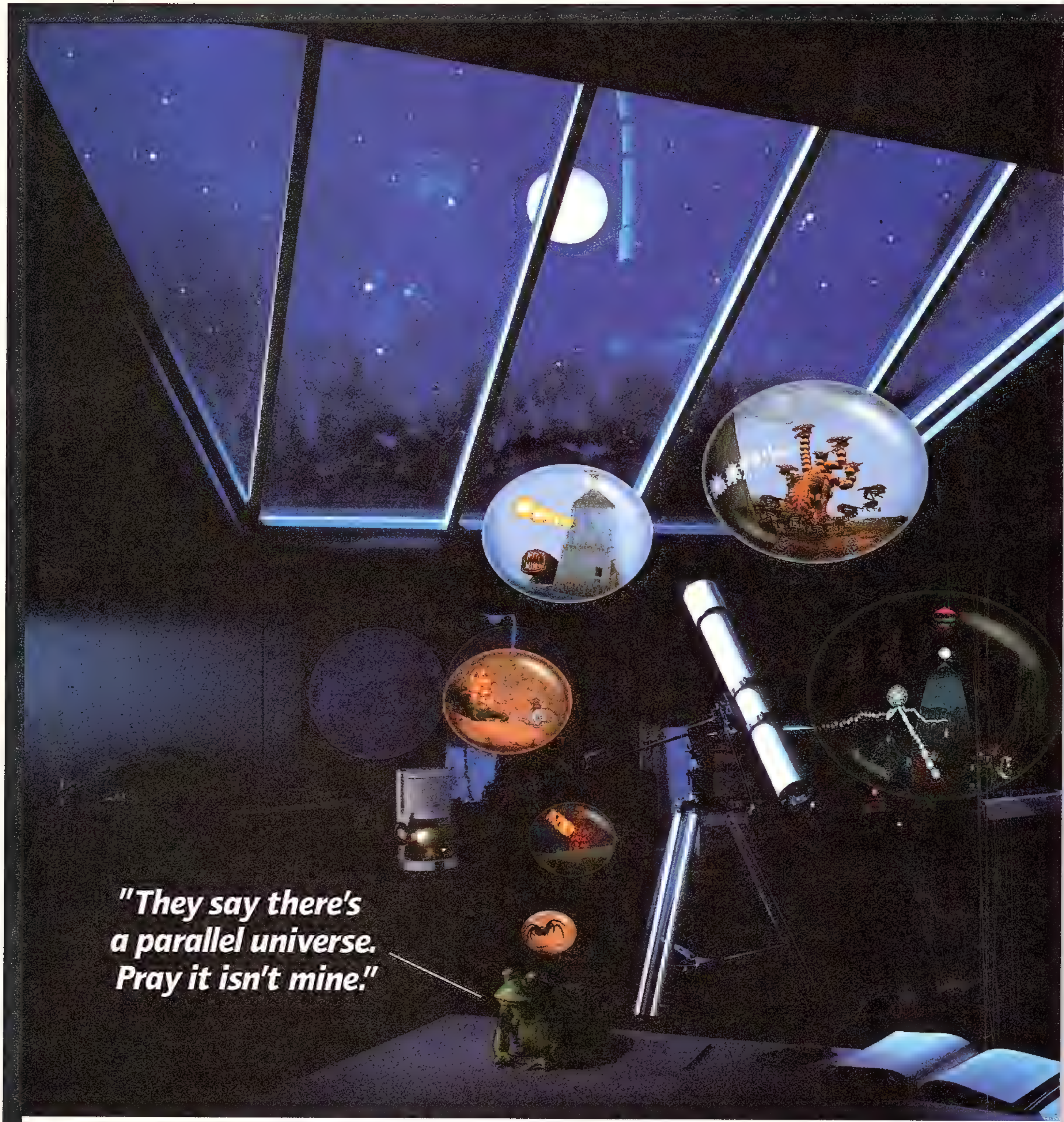
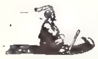
Product Information Number 134


"They say there's a parallel universe. Pray it isn't mine."



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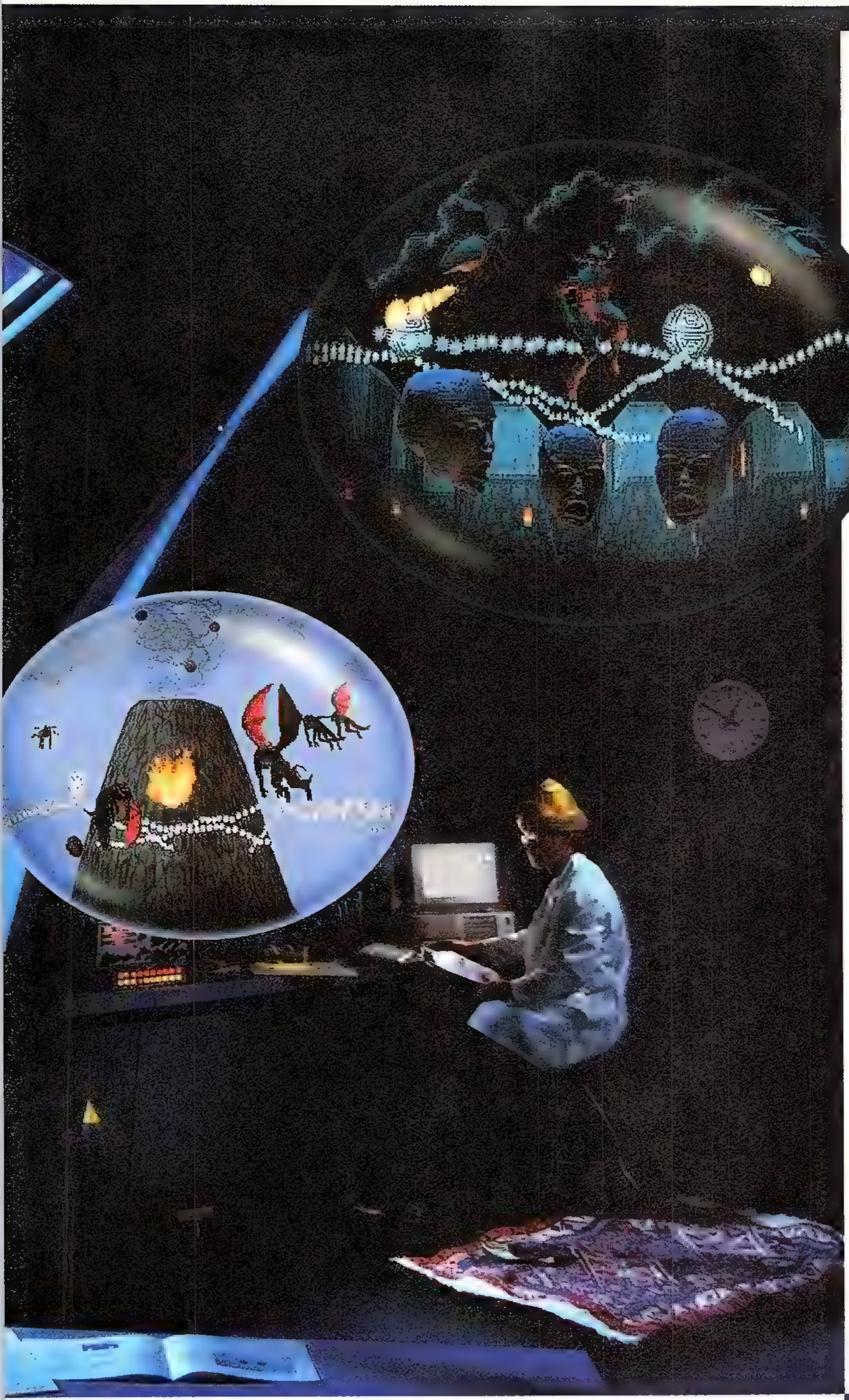

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MAGIC CARPET 2
THE NETHERWORLDS
PC-CD
(for an interactive demo) http://www.ea.com/bullfrog.html

Product Information Number 120

Edited by Doug Lombardi

see it on the Disc!

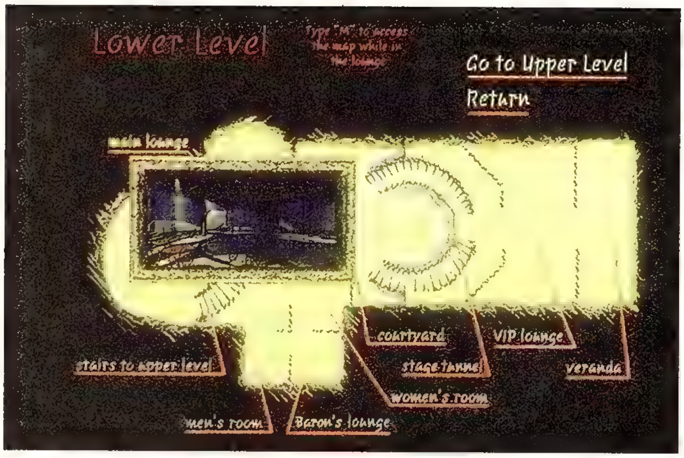
It's Only Rock-n-ROM

The making of the Rolling Stones' Voodoo Lounge *disc*

As I climbed into the passenger seat of her black Pathfinder, multimedia producer Toni Young hung up her cell phone and said, "That was my friend Natalie." She handed me the morning edition of the *L.A. Times*, pointed to the front page, and said "There's Nat." Pictured on the page were two women who had testified against former police detective Mark Fuhrman in the O. J. Simpson double murder trial—Kathleen Bell and "Natalie" Singer.

Another routine day in L.A., I thought, as Young drove to what I assumed would be a multimedia studio somewhere in the industrial district. Instead, we drove to a luxurious Hollywood Hills neighborhood and pulled into the driveway of a small mansion. "Welcome to Hollywood," Young said, as she pulled her keys out of the ignition and grabbed her things. But this was no ordinary mansion; it was the place where the Rolling Stones' *Voodoo Lounge CD-ROM* was being mastered.

Inside, phones and fax machines were ringing off the hook. Posters of the Stones lined the walls of this estate-turned-studio. Upstairs, the would-be bedrooms were filled with high-end multimedia systems, editing boards, and engineers. After spending nearly two years in production, the team had just 48 hours to deliver the gold master. Needless to say, things were chaotic.



A map of the Lounge serves as the title's primary interface.

Start 'em up

The chaos began in the spring of 1994, when Young received a phone call from producer David Eno. He was calling to discuss a CD-ROM project that involved a "major" recording artist. Would she be interested in coproducing it with him?

Young, who has managed Depeche Mode and produced the Technology Theme Park for Peter Gabriel's WOMAD Tour, told him that she was interested but wary of the potential clashes between the "major" recording artist and a crew of multimedia engineers.

When Young learned that the artist in question was the Rolling Stones, she told Eno that she was definitely *not* interested.

"I told them, 'I am not a Stones fan. I am not your market. You do not want me to go off and do the Toni Young version of the Rolling Stones on CD-ROM. You don't want anybody to do that.'" Young's point: She would not do the project unless the Stones themselves were creatively involved.

After much discussion, the band agreed and Young prepared four story outlines for the Stones to consider. Jagger came to Young with the one they chose and said, "I like this one, let's do it."

Before they got started, Young showed the band other music-

continued on page 32

BLUES WHO'S WHO
BLUES
CHICAGO BLUES

The disc provides you with a reading list of essential books on the Blues.

CD-ROM MULTIPACKS:

More for Your Money?

Distributors target consumers' frugal side

With CD-ROM sales rising and the fight for retail shelf space becoming increasingly fierce, many distributors looking for new ways to reach buyers are getting into the business of selling multipacks.

Whether they are actually bundling 10 CDs in a box or 10 games on one CD, distributors are trying to appeal to the consumer's sense of value. They may also be trying to recycle old or less popular programs.

On the surface, the multipack idea seems like a great deal .Ten CDs for about $30 is far more cost efficient than one CD for $40 or $50. But take a closer look at what's inside these multipacks and many consumers may discover that they aren't such a bargain after all.

ACTIVISION CLASSICS
RIVER RAID II
BARNSTORMING
ACTIVISION'S ATARI 2600 ACTION PACK 2
FOR WINDOWS 95
IBM CD-ROM
15 Games for your PC

Quantity Versus Quality

Many of the titles in the multipacks never made it out of the warehouse on their own or were only on the shelf for a limited time.

"For some, it's a desperation move," says Bruce Fredrickson, president of Channel Tactics, a firm that launches software products into the market.

According to Fredrickson, the multipack is often a developer's or distributor's way of unloading aging or unwanted product.

"They'll take whatever they can and just hope to make something. The consumer who buys that kind of product shouldn't expect much."

Not every multipack is considered a shovelware compilation. In fact, some multipacks, such as *Sirius' 5ft. 10 Pak*, have enjoyed an extended run on the PC Data best-seller list. However, the *5ft. 10 Pak* is the exception and not the rule.

"Some of the products are basically ripping off the consumer," said Fredrickson. "What the consumer is getting here is quantity and not necessarily quality. There are only a few of these packs that are quality—you only see a few that have top titles."

Collector's
5ft. 10 PAK
THE ORIGINAL
10 Full Version CD-ROMs for Your PC Computer!

The multipack is another buyer beware situation.

The Consumer Knows Best

The *5ft. 10 Pak* was one of the first multimedia multipacks to hit the retail shelf. It was the brainchild of Sirius' president and CEO, Richard Gnant.

"Most of the people at the time thought I was crazy," says Gnant. "Years ago, Sirius Publishing had a problem getting the product to consumers. If we could get our titles in their hands, they would continue to buy them. But with shelf space becoming a problem, we needed a vehicle to put our product in front of users."

Now that the CD-ROM market has virtually exploded, other distributors have followed Gnant's lead.

Although he believes that some of the other multipacks will survive, Gnant said that most of them are not being marketed correctly and will be ignored by consumers.

"There are a tremendous number of make-a-buck marketers," said Gnant. "Consumers will know, however, that they are getting the short end of the stick. The majority of people in the business—who aren't distributing quality product—need to understand that they are dealing with an educated consumer."

Since educated consumers are likely to pass over these shovelware compilations, publishers have taken slightly new approaches to the

ocean
GAMER'S DOZEN
12 Games For One Low Price!
12 Hit Games Now Available On CD-ROM for IBM PC and 100% compatibles.

continued on page 33

Disc War Is Over

After months of wrangling and one-upsmanship, Philips/Sony and Toshiba/Time Warner have settled on a single format for high-density digital video discs (DVD).

Offering recordability and a maximum storage capacity of 17 gigabytes, the new DVD format is being touted as a replacement for both CD-ROMs and videotape. Some even consider it a major step towards the merger of televisions and computers in American homes.

Competition

In the past year, Sony and Phillips introduced a DVD called the "Multimedia CD," while a group led by Time Warner and Toshiba introduced another, incompatible version called the SD (super density) disc. Fearing a replay of the VHS-Betamax battle of the 1980s, drive manufacturers, publishers, and movie studios were reluctant to embrace either standard. Now that the compatibility issue has been settled, product development can begin in earnest.

However, other questions remain, such as when these discs will make their debut and how much they will cost.

Analysts and developers predict the first DVD titles won't appear before next summer, and that they will cost the same as today's CD-ROMs. However, new drives will be needed to read the DVD titles; these machines are expected to cost around $500.

Compatibility

The most pressing question is whether the new drives will be able to read existing CD-ROMs. Manufacturers say yes, but others are not as optimistic.

"That would be a real feat," says Bruce Ryon, an analyst at DataQuest in San Jose. "They'll probably abandon that objective and consumers will have to wait until they are ready to move to a DVD drive." *– D. L.*

Rolling Stones

continued from page 30

oriented CD-ROMs so that everyone could get an idea of how they wanted to approach this project. The Residents' *Freak Show* caught their eye and gave them some initial creative inspiration.

From there, the project took on its own life. What was originally planned as a simple three-room atmosphere grew into a two-story, House of Blues on Bourbon Street-like club with dozens of rooms to explore. At first, the Stones themselves were only going to appear in the videos shown at the lounge. But when the lounge came to virtual life, they decided to come and join the party.

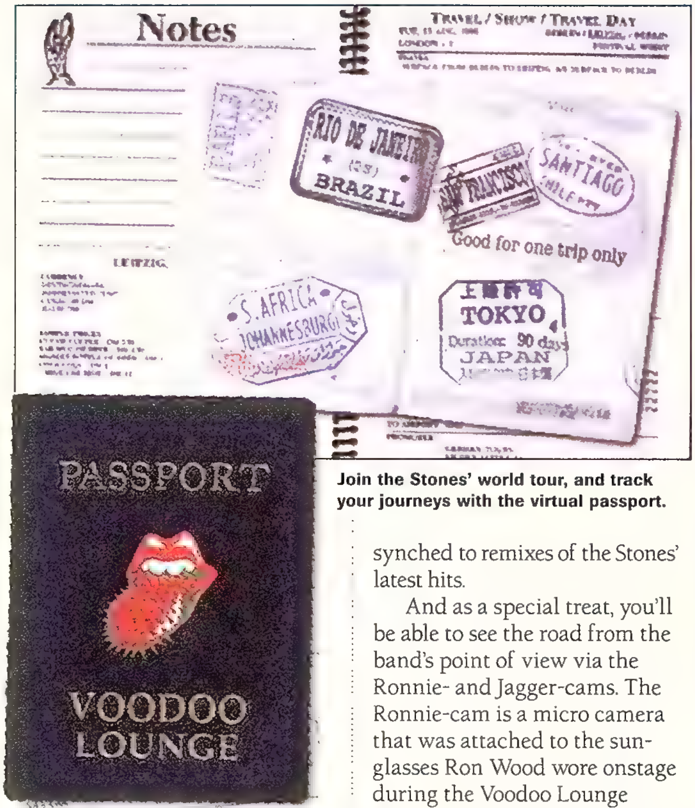
"We put in gorgeous girls and hilarious drag queens," said Young. "Then Mick said, 'We'll be in it too,' and the rest of the band said, 'Yeah, that's a good idea.' "

Once the Stones had decided to appear on disc, Keith Richards came to Young and expressed a desire to give the title an element of cultural motivation. He wanted people to discover the music and literature that inspired the Stones.

Richards' suggestion sparked a new element in the disc: influences. Young and her crew went on a treasure hunt in search of rare footage of artists like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. The result adds a touch of class that will likely differentiate this disc from other CD-ROM exercises in self-indulgence. In fact, Young claims that each of these clips is rare and that most have never been seen in a commercial product.

The Honky Tonk Disc

With their work nearly complete, Young offered *CD-ROM Today* an exclusive early look at the upcoming disc, which is due out in late October. As you enter the Voodoo Lounge, you'll discover a world that is uniquely the Rolling Stones. The band that started off playing blues standards more than 30 years ago in London seems to have successfully made the transition from stadium concerts to the computer screen.



Join the Stones' world tour, and track your journeys with the virtual passport.

The music clips are surprisingly down-to-earth, and true to the Stones' roots. Most of the clips show the band playing in exclusive instrumental jam sessions, or portray artists that influenced the band. And when you watch one of these clips, the Stones don't give you a monologue about how the artist influenced their music; they very tastefully turn toward the clip and watch it with you.

There's also a fair amount of humor on the disc—from the men's bathroom, where you'll find Keith and Ronnie cracking jokes, to the women's restroom, where you'll find Jagger discussing his wardrobe with a pair of seemingly uninterested yet openly affectionate young admirers.

After you've visited the loo, you can take a seat at the mixing board with Mick and the boys as they mix the tracks from the *Voodoo Lounge* audio CD. The title will also feature the "Screen-Raver," a video editing sim synched to remixes of the Stones' latest hits.

And as a special treat, you'll be able to see the road from the band's point of view via the Ronnie- and Jagger-cams. The Ronnie-cam is a micro camera that was attached to the sunglasses Ron Wood wore onstage during the Voodoo Lounge World Tour. The Jagger-cam is a standard camcorder that Mick took with him on the road. Sure, many artists have done this type of thing before. But how many have taken you outside of the arena to buy a bootleg T-shirt for $10?

"There are lots of things [on the disc] that have been done before," confesses Young. "But if you do what you do best, the rest will come naturally."

—Doug Lombardi

THEY SAID IT!

A good operating system is like a good date: It's smart, user friendly, and costs less than $100.

Comedian Jay Leno at the Windows 95 Launch Party

XXX

I think you need to use real people in order to have horror and engender fear through a game.

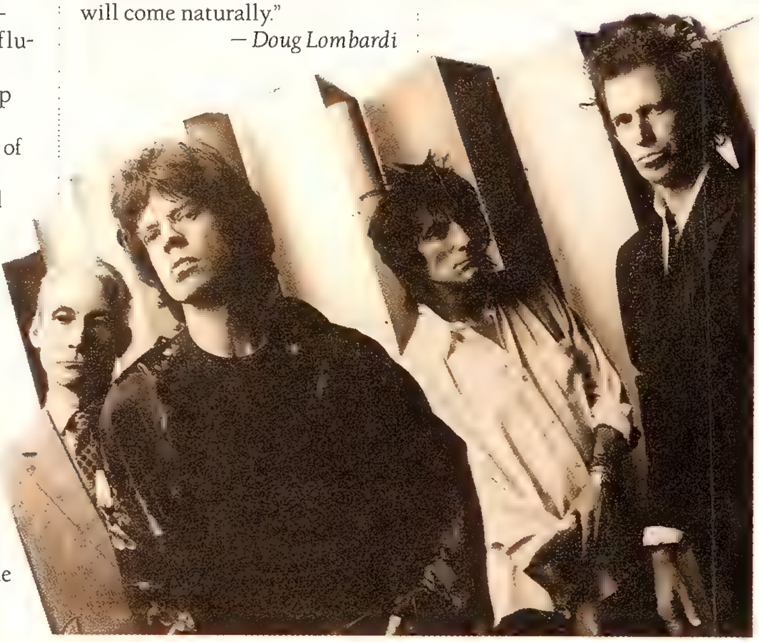
Roberta Williams, creator of Sierra On-Line's *Phantasmagoria*

XXX

Other CD-ROM companies think this is all about business. [Multimedia] isn't about commerce, it's about art.

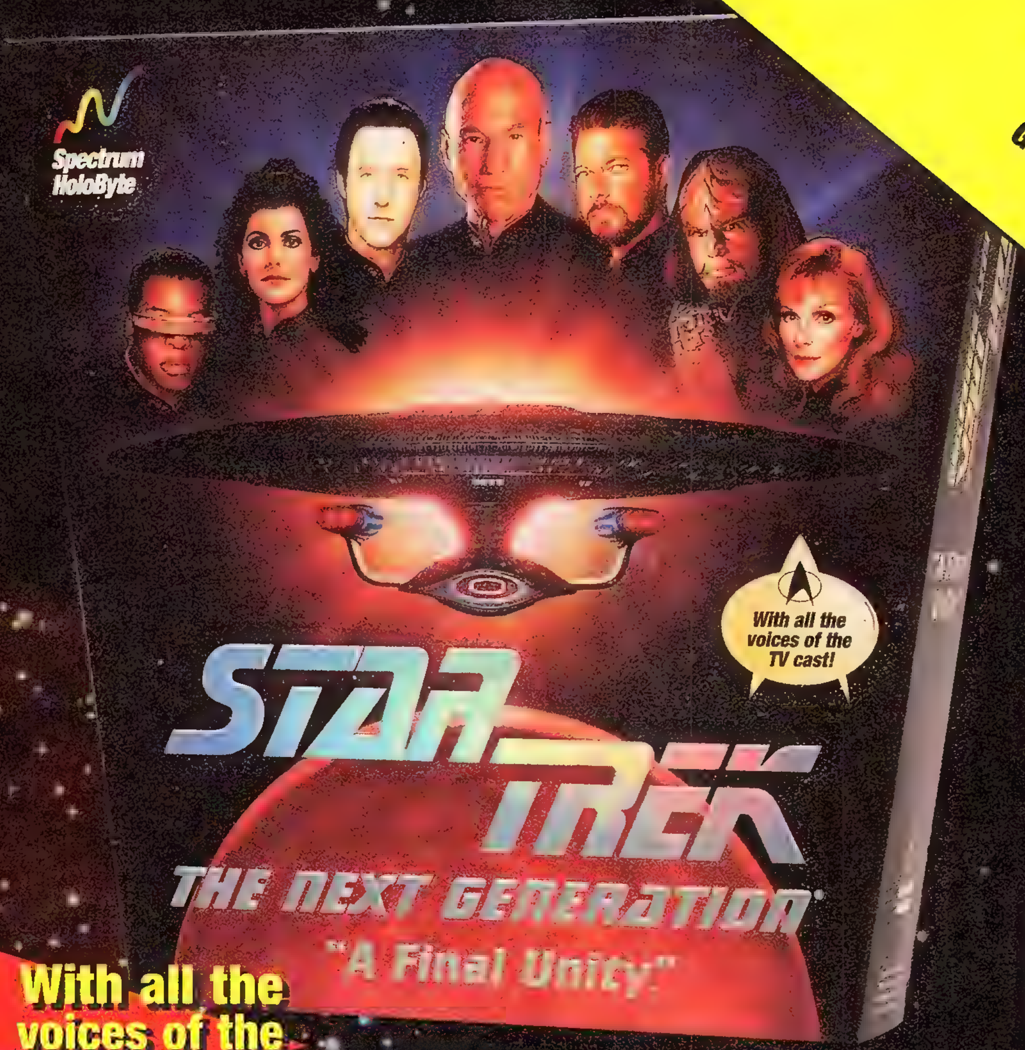
Marc Canter, co-founder of Macromedia and CEO of Canter Technology

XXX



"Best Star Trek Game Ever ..."
—Multimedia World

Golden Triad Award Winner
—Computer Game Review



With all the voices of the TV Cast!

"MAKE IT SO."™

Join Captain Picard™ and the crew in "A Final Unity," an interactive CD-ROM adventure filled with mystery and danger. Control the U.S.S. Enterprise™ as you encounter treacherous alien ships, visit strange new worlds, and travel from the outposts of Federation space and beyond—into the uncharted dangers of a massive nebula.

The unmatched realism of "A Final Unity" is brought to life by characters who speak to you, rich cinematic sequences, Super VGA graphics, and CD-quality sound and music.

Experience hours of entertaining exploration as you unravel secrets from the ancient past in this STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION® epic.

Take your post and *Engage!*

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION® "A Final Unity."

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Tension builds on the bridge as another Red Alert appears imminent.

OPEN ALL FREQUENCIES
HAIL
RESUME

Open hailing frequencies and prepare for the unexpected.

Alert your Away Team and pick the right combination of talent for each critical mission.

Available for PC and Mac CD-ROM

Spectrum HoloByte

2490 Mariner Square Loop, Alameda, CA 94501
http://www.holobyte.com
Visit your local retailer or call 24 hours: 1-800-695-GAME (USA and Canada)

Product Information Number 178

CD-ROM Multipacks

continued from page 31

multipack for the 1995 holiday season.

First, there is the old marketing trick of promoting one popular title to camouflage a collection of duds. Then there are the nostalgia packs that are commonplace in record stores but a relatively new idea in the software sales arena.

Activision is one such developer: It has taken 10 of its vintage games from the early 1980s and packaged them on one *Action-Packed CD-ROM*. No one is really expecting these nostalgia collections to have a tremendous appeal to consumers. However, some say that they have a relatively good chance at surviving.

"There will always be an end-of-life reason to have multipacks, but they will never control the top 10," says Fredrickson. "It's like records—you see the collections make it from time to time, but that's not where the major money is going to be."

– D. L.

12 CD-ROMs
MEGAPAK 3
MEGAMEDIA corporation

SUPER 10 PACK

Multipacks offer a lot for the money, but quality CDs are rare.

PC DATA'S TOP 20 LIST

This Month	Last Month	Title	Manufacturer	Price
1	*	Ultimate Doom Thy Flesh	GT Interactive	$32
2	*	Star Trek: Next Generation Final Unity	Spectrum Holobyte	$53
3	1	Myst	Broderbund	$45
4	2	Dark Forces	LucasArts	$47
5	3	Microsoft Flight Simulator	Microsoft	$44
6	*	MechWarrior II	Activision	$51
7	5	NASCAR Racing	Papyrus	$44
8	4	Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble	Broderbund	$71
9	6	Full Throttle	LucasArts	$45
10	7	Doom II	GT Interactive	$44
11	9	Virtual Pool	Interplay	$42
12	11	Corel Gallery	Corel	$51
13	10	Lion King Storybook	Disney	$31
14	*	Space Quest IV	Sierra On-Line	$50
15	8	Descent	Interplay	$34
16	16	Quicken CD-ROM Deluxe	Intuit	$57
17	13	Doom Companion	Viacom	$30
18	15	Links	Access	$31
19	19	Street Atlas USA	DeLorme	$75
20	12	5Ft. 10 Pak Special Edition	Sirius	$30

NET·NOTES

Map of the Stars

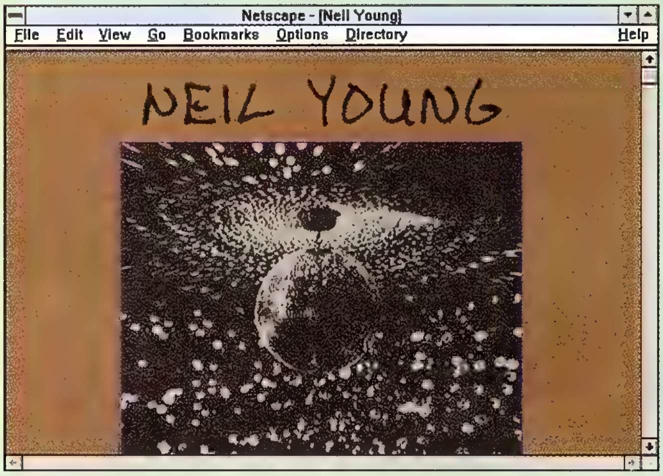
One of the coolest things about the Internet is that you can find out what's going on in Hollywood before the rest of the world has been inundated with the corresponding promotional hype.

The long-awaited *Star Wars Trilogy* on videocassette is one Hollywood project that has enjoyed much online attention. At the Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment Web site, *Star Wars* fans can find games, information about the actors, rare interview footage with *Star Wars* creator George Lucas, and downloadable film clips. Visitors will be able to purchase the *Trilogy* at a 15 percent savings. They will also find information on other Twentieth Century Fox projects at the site, which is located at http://www.tcfhe.com.

If you love music, you need to plan a trip to Music Boulevard. With more than 145,000 listings, the Boulevard is a place to read biographies and reviews, hear 30-second samples, and purchase music titles of many genres. When you arrive, you may search by genre, artist, or song title. In addition to information on the artists and marketing material on their work, Music Boulevard also features reviews and interviews from *Spin*, *Blues Review*, *Billboard*, and *Fanfare*. The Boulevard, which is located at http://www.musicblvd.com, also features a new releases section.

Reprise Records has taken the "music online" concept one step further. Calling it the beginning of what will be the future of online communications, Reprise has set up individual pages within its Web site for each of its artists. For example, those who want to read about Neil Young can go to the Reprise Web site and find information about the past, present, and future of his musical career. Reprise is hoping that artists will become more involved in choosing the content for their pages, giving fans an added incentive to visit the site regularly. Located at http://RepriseRec.com, the site also lets you buy CDs online.

– D. L.



Neil Young's Web page: "Everybody Knows This is Nowhere."

Discovery Channel
A fun way to introduce your child to multiple language & vocabulary skills
Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip
Animal Safari
Discovery Channel
Power Mac
Macintosh
CD-ROM
Kids
Big Job
Ages 4-8
Discovery Channel
Power PC
CD-ROM
Kids
A fun way to introduce your child to multiple language & vocabulary skills
Professor Iris' Fun Field Trip
Seaside Adventure
Let Your Child Explore:
An interactive adventure with fun & challenging games
Creative explorations & activities • Four languages
Mini documentaries & music videos

IT'S HOURS OF FUN FOR YOUR KIDS AT THE BEACH! ON SAFARI! ON THE JOB!

Children 4 and up will thrill to the interactive delights in these three action-packed CD-ROMs.

BIG JOB: Climb aboard and take control of fire, farm and construction trucks. Incredible 3-D animation takes young truckers to construction sites, to the farm and to the firehouse for challenging and enriching games that promise hours of creative enjoyment.

PROFESSOR IRIS' SEASIDE ADVENTURE and **ANIMAL SAFARI**: Take a holiday with Professor Iris and the gang for a field trip to the beach or on safari in Africa! There's music. Videos. Sing-alongs. Special games and activities. There are even multiple language skills as kids learn new vocabulary words. Easy point-and-click navigation has kids comfortable with the latest technology in minutes.

These three content-rich CD-ROMs can provide a library of children's activities for years to come. So hop on down to your local software dealer. And pick up three CD-ROMs that send your kids on a world of adventure!

Discovery Channel
Multimedia

To purchase visit your local software dealer or call

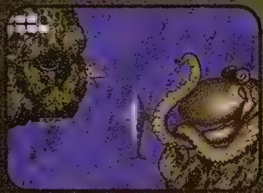
1-800-762-2189

Available in Windows and Mac versions. © 1995 DCI

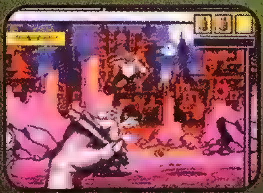
Product Information Number 116

COMPUTERS WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

Remember what video games were like before Sega? Neither do we. Now we're coming to your computer. Actually, it's the other way around. Thanks to the Pentium® processor's speed and Windows® 95's compatibility, PCs have finally reached the level it takes to run pulse-quickening, adrenaline-pumping Sega games. And with more video, higher-resolution graphics and better animation, the games are even better in the PC format. You already have a hot computer. Now feed it the hottest games. (And just between us, aren't games the real reason you got a personal computer?)

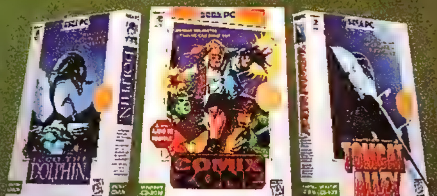


Dive into the high-resolution graphics and improved animations on **ECCO THE DOLPHIN**.



COMIX ZONE blasts you with intense, high-speed combat only Sega can deliver.

Fly into **TOMCAT ALLEY'S** danger zone with a full hour of ultra-smooth, mega action video footage.



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SEGA® PC

Product Information Number 173

NEW HARDWARE

IBM Introduces New Aptiva Series

Consumer PCs to ship with OS/2 Warp

In an effort to keep a share of the market the company helped create, IBM has introduced the Aptiva series, a new series of models in its Aptiva multimedia computers.

With these 13 new systems —five desktop models and eight minitowers—IBM has adopted the increasingly popular uniform approach to hardware design and marketing.

For example, each Aptiva features a quad-speed CD-ROM, 28.8/14.4-Kbps data/fax modem, voice recognition, and two external 30-watt Jazz speakers. Memory ranges from 8MB of RAM on the lower-end systems to 16MB of RAM on the higher-end units. Unlike other lines of multimedia computers that offer 486 DX/4 chips on their lower-end systems, all of the new Aptivas use a Pentium processor.

The systems range from $1,799 for a 75-MHz Pentium to $2,999 for a 133-MHz Pentium. Monitors are not included with the systems.

All of the new Aptivas use a Pentium processor.

A variety of software is bundled with all models, including *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia*, *Wall Street Money*, and Broderbund's new MPEG title *Silent Steel.*

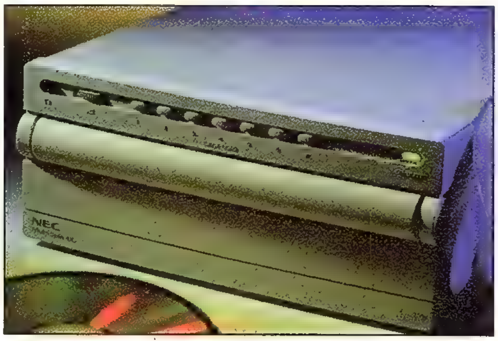
In a last-gasp effort to prop up OS/2 Warp, IBM is the only major manufacturer not shipping its new line with Windows 95 installed.

The Aptivas come with a three-year warranty, a 24-hour service hotline, and an online housecall feature. With the latter, consumers can call in and talk with a technical support agent while the agent remotely accesses their system to diagnose the problem. For more information, call (800) 426-4968.

—D. L.

Room for Seven, If You've Got Time

NEC's quad-speed changer offers a choice



The 4Xc is compatible with both Mac and Windows discs.

The introduction of multiple-CD titles, such as *Phantasmagoria*, has increased the need for CD changers. And the recent introduction of NEC's MultiSpin 4Xc marks one of the most important advances in the evolution of CD-ROM changers —affordability.

Available for a suggested retail price of $349, the MultiSpin 4Xc will now lead the market in terms of pricing. However, it will not be winning any awards for speedy transfer rates or access times.

The new NEC changer has a seven-disc capacity that automatically shuffles the discs in and out of the drive for you. It is compatible with both Mac and Windows formats. And it supports all standards, including enhanced CD (CD+), CD-I, XA, and VideoCD playback.

What's missing from this inexpensive and versatile changer is speed. With a data transfer rate of 600KB per second and an access time of 350 ms (one-third stroke), the NEC MultiSpin 4Xc is substantially slower than its more expensive competitor—Pioneer's DRM-624X—which features a data transfer rate of 676KB per second, an average access time of 150 ms (one-third stroke), and a suggested retail price of $795.

For more information on NEC's MultiSpin 4Xc, call (800) 366-0476. For more information on Pioneer's DRM-624X, call (800) 444-6784. *—D. L.*

HITACHI'S STUDIOPAD:

A Multimedia Etch-a-Sketch

The home version of a high-end graphics tablet

In theory, the graphics tablet is the perfect solution for those who love to draw, but not with a mouse. Unfortunately, this kind of device has never been successfully developed for mass consumption—until now.

The new 405J StudioPad from Hitachi Digital Graphics is designed to produce quality images at an affordable price. The StudioPad was developed as the consumer's model of Hitachi's 6 x 9 MultiPad, a high-end, higher priced graphics tablet designed for industry professionals.

Sold in both Macintosh and Windows versions, the StudioPad is now available for a suggested retail price of $199.99. It features 256 levels of pressure and 0.01-inch accuracy. On the Mac side, the StudioPad has a maximum speed of 140 points per second (pps). On the Windows side, it has a maximum speed of 205 pps.

Unlike most input pads that eventually lead you back to your keyboard or mouse to perfect your image, the StudioPad has a 15-key function bar at the top of the drawing area that allows you to draw, edit, and adjust your images from the tablet itself. You may also use the overlay feature to trace images.

In addition, it was designed to use minimum power so it can be used effectively with laptop computers. For more information, call (800) 225-1370.

—D. L.

Your pad or mine? Hitachi's graphics tablet makes you faster on the draw.

DON'T JUST DODGE ROCKETS,

DANCE WITH THEM,

SING A SONG TO THEM,

THEN **TATTOO**

YOUR

ON THEIR

NICKEL

PLA

Microsoft

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?™

You play games like a natural born gamer.
Enveloped in digital optical technology,
you fire with the accuracy of an eagle
packing high powered binoculars.
Every minuscule move you make is
transmitted quickly down the line of fire.
Every handle rotation, a new twisted
SideWinder™ 3D Pro gamer viewpoint.
You and the joystick are one.
And this is one joystick that never begs for mercy,
as its optical tracking system has no moving parts
to grind or molest.
Bullets curse when they miss, listen.
It's a phenomenon known only by those who choose
a joystick that needs no re-calibration
and tracks you at the speed of light.
This is the jet black void of the gaming experience.
This is the SideWinder 3D Pro joystick, compatible
with all MS-DOS®-based and Windows® 95-based games,
the elder of the SideWinder joystick family.
All the dexterity of a gaming demigod is yours to
call upon, and with one finger you vent retribution
on every shiny dark destructive heart.

INITIALS
TED
SKULLS.

Microsoft
Microsoft
SideWinder
3D Pro

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Aspiring to Windows 95

Acer launches eleven new multimedia systems

In addition to being ergonomically correct and as uniquely designed as any system to date, Acer's new line of multimedia systems also offers a wide range of features.

Of the 11 new systems, known as the Aspire series, only one is being shipped with anything less than a quad-speed CD-ROM and 75-MHz Pentium processor. Divided into five desktop models and six minitowers, all of the new systems come with Windows 95 and a three-year warranty, including free on-site repairs during the first year. A host of software titles, including *Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus* and Intuit's *Quicken SE*, is also bundled with the Aspire systems.

The six minitowers have a 28.8-Kbps fax modem and range from $1,999 with a 100-MHz Pentium processor to $2,799 with a 133-MHz Pentium processor. The five desktop models feature a 14.4-Kbps fax modem and range from $1,299 with a 486/DX4 to $1,899 with a 100-MHz Pentium processor. Monitors are not included and only the Pentium 100 and 133 models have a CPU cache.

For more information, call (800) 223-7763.

— D. L.

Acer's Aspire PCs offer sleek lines and designer colors.

Compaq Rolls Out New Presarios

PCs feature the latest in sight and sound

The new Presarios include hardware-based MPEG support.

Compaq has unveiled its latest offerings for the home, the Presario 5500 and 9500 series.

Both the all-in-one desktop 5500 and the minitower 9500 systems come with sound and motion technology, which provides Spatilizer 3D stereo sound, integrated 16-bit stereo sound (compatible with most Sound Blaster applications), and tone control. The systems include hardware-based MPEG support, a feature unique to the Presarios that will help enable full-screen, full-motion video. And they will also offer quad-speed CD-ROM drives, speakerphone capability, and a three-year warranty.

The 5500, which has a retail price of $1,999, comes with a 14-inch Super VGA color monitor, 1GB hard-disk drive, and a 75-MHz Pentium processor. The 5500 also has a 19.2/14.4-Kbps data/fax modem with a telephone answering machine and a PCI local video bus. However, the 5500 also includes a slow ISA expansion bus and a fused monitor that will not tilt or swivel.

The 9500 minitowers are all sold without monitors. The 9546, which has a retail price of $2,099, is stocked with a 100-MHz Pentium processor, 1GB hard-disk drive, 8MB RAM, and a 19.2/14.4-Kbps data/fax modem. The 9548, which retails for $2,499, has a 100-MHz Pentium processor, 1.6GB hard-disk drive, 16MB RAM, and a 28.8/14.4-Kbps data/fax modem. And the 9564, $2,999 model, sports a 133-MHz Pentium processor, 1.6GB hard-disk drive, 16MB RAM, and a 28.8/14.4-Kbps data/fax modem.

Each model comes with more than 30 software titles, including *Microsoft Encarta '95*, *Echo Lake*, *The Masters*, and *SimTown*. For more information, call (800) 888-5858.

— D. L.

Another Performa on the Way

Apple adds high-performance model to line of PowerPCs

Back in September, we told you about Apple's 5200 and 6200 series that featured quad-speed CD-ROM drives and 75-MHz PowerPC 603 processors.

Now, Apple has introduced yet another consumer Mac, the Performa 6300, which features a 100-MHz PowerPC 603e.

The 6300 will also feature 16MB of RAM, a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, a 1.2GB hard-disk drive, a 15-inch multiscan monitor with internal speakers, and a 28.8-Kbps fax modem.

In addition to the more powerful processor, the 6300's modem is also faster than its 5200 or 6200 counterpart.

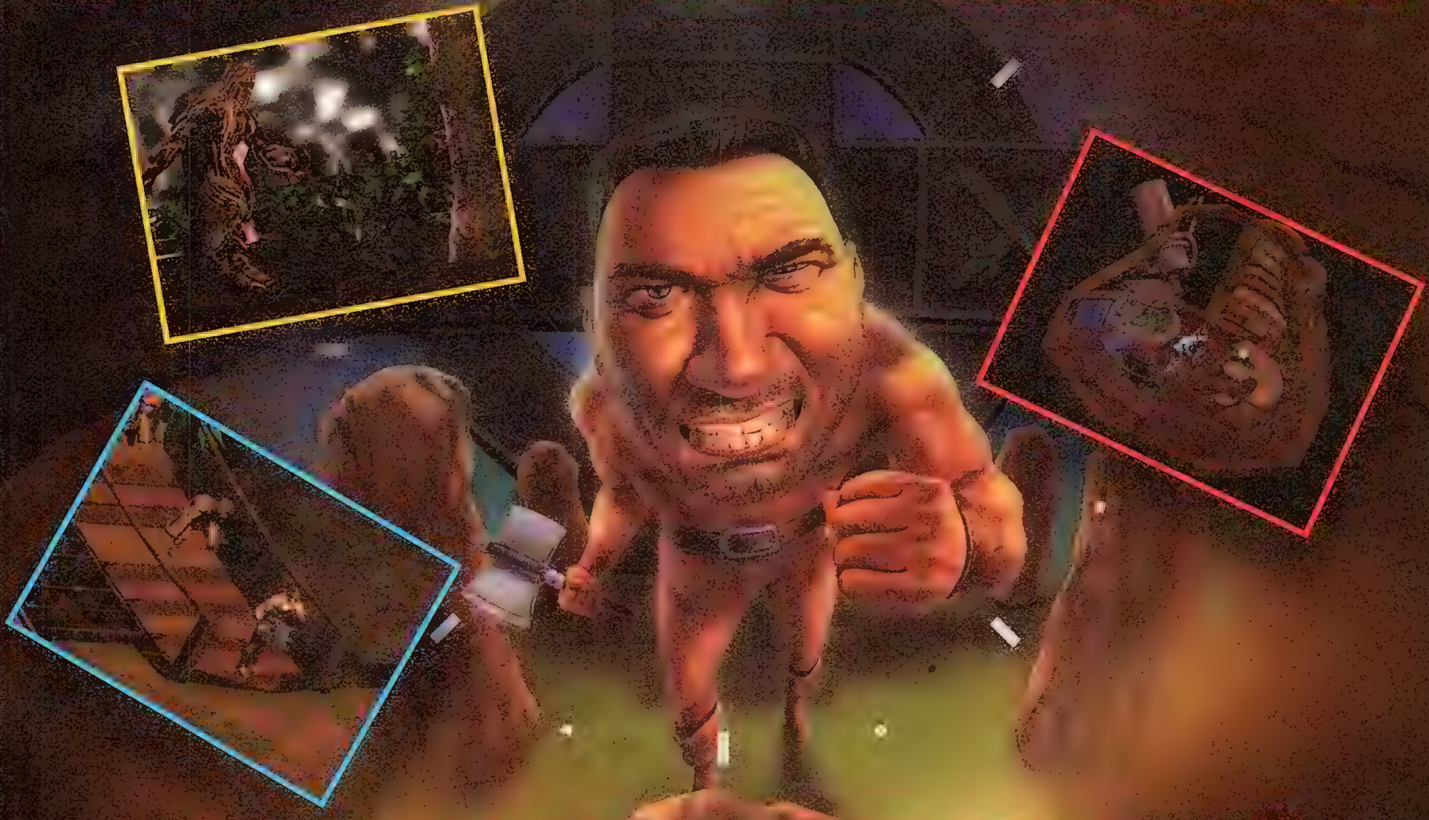
At press time, the estimated street price for this new system was between $2,700 and $2,800.

For more information, call (800) 776-2333.

— D. L.

Apple's 6300 is the latest addition to the Performa line.

OUT OF YOUR MIND...



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Product Information Number 175

PREVIEWS

OF UPCOMING

PRODUCTS

The Dark Eye

Fear, death and madness from Edgar Allen Poe

With animation by Doug Beswick (*Beetlejuice*, *Aliens*), voice-overs by William S. Burroughs (*Junky*, *Naked Lunch*), and music produced by Thomas Dolby's Headspace studio, *The Dark Eye* may become known as one of the more eccentric yet elegant CD-ROM titles of 1995.

The Dark Eye **is an exploration through the work of Edgar Allen Poe.**

The hauntingly lush 3D environment immerses you in a chilling multimedia adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe's tales, edited and expanded for this project by author Russell Lees.

It will not be a light, happy title for the whole family to enjoy. But those who love the work of Edgar Allen Poe or are in touch with the dark side of life will find themselves spending hours with this disc, exploring the macabre worlds of Poe's tales and characters.

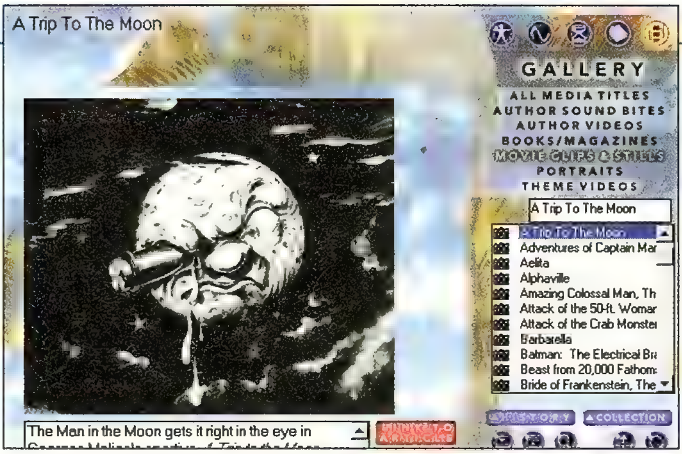
One of *Dark Eye*'s unique features will be the ability to jump from character to character while moving through the scenes. In fact, you'll have to do this to make your way through the entire title.

Inscape also employs this technique on the Residents' upcoming disc, *Bad Day on the Midway* (see our December issue for more information on The Residents).

In both *The Dark Eye* and *Bad Day*, designers and programmers merge interesting ideas with vivid graphics, creating titles that are, if nothing else, quite bizarre.

Format: **Windows/Mac**
Expected Release: **Fall 1995**
Price: **$59.95**
Publisher: **Inscape**
More info: **(310) 312-5705**

Vivid claymation-style animation is one of *The Dark Eye*'s striking features.



A Trip To The Moon
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BOOKS/MAGAZINES
MOVIE CLIPS & STILLS
PORTRAITS
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A Trip To The Moon
Adventures of Captain Mar
Aelita
Alphaville
Amazing Colossal Man, Th
Attack of the 50-ft. Womar
Attack of the Crab Monstei
Barbarella
Batman: The Electrical Bra
Beast from 20,000 Fathom:
Bride of Frankenstein, The
COLLECTION

The Man in the Moon gets it right in the eye in

***Grolier Science Fiction*'s video library offers trailers from classic films to cheesy space operas.**

Grolier Science Fiction

Sci-Fi encyclopedia finally becomes fact

Grolier has been pushing back the release date of this title for months. But it seems *Grolier Science Fiction*, a CD-ROM based on the Hugo Award-winning book *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, will finally ship this fall.

Like the book, the CD-ROM will be an almost endless source of sci-fi information. It is scheduled to feature 4,500 entries, including previously unpublished articles by the book's editors, John Clute and Peter Nichols. The entries will cover sci-fi authors, illustrators, films, filmmakers, magazines, and comics from around the globe.

Available in both Windows and Macintosh formats for a suggested retail price of $59.95, *Grolier Science Fiction* will also feature video trailers, posters, and other marketing materials from several classic (and not so classic) sci-fi flicks.

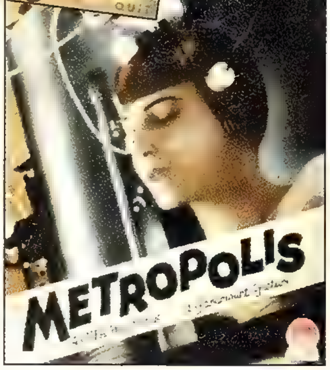
But that's not all Grolier is up to these days. In addition to the sci-fi title, the company has released *The 1996 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* and launched a new game division called 3-Prong Play. Almost every entry in the encyclopedia will have a CompuServe link; the CD will retail for about $60.

The first releases from the 3-Prong Play division will include *Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf*, a 3D golf sim; *Terror T.R.A.X.*, an interactive adventure from some of the folks who gave us *Johnny Mnemonic*; and *S.F.P.D. Homicide*, *Case File: The Body in the Bay*, a Columbo-style interactive movie where you must solve a murder case, with a corpse as your primary clue.

Format: **Windows/Mac**
Expected Release: **Fall 1995**
Price: **$59.95**
Publisher: **Grolier**
More info: **(800) 285-4534**
(203) 797-3530

SCIENCE FICTION

You can explore time, space, alien life forms, and more.



METROPOLIS

see it on *the* Disc!

All This Time

Every little thing Sting does, and does, and does...

Sting's *All This Time* features "live" performances of 15 songs.

Slated for a November release, Sting's *All This Time* is a multimedia collage of interviews and music videos presented with the detail and character you've expect from this rock-'n'roll veteran.

Unlike many other discs that bear a famous performer's name, *All This Time* actually was partly produced by Sting himself.

In addition to spending a week shooting the interviews and "acoustic interludes," Sting invited the film crew into his home to shoot the library and music room for two of the disc's "song spaces."

In these song spaces, you will need to click on virtually everything to be sure that you don't miss an interview or interlude. Be sure to check all the artwork in the rooms as well—especially in the church and the library—or else you will miss this title's humorous, tongue-in-cheek side.

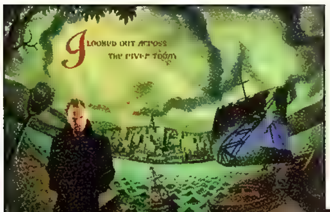
There are six song spaces to explore and a total of 15 songs on the disc. All of the music is post-Police work, save for an acoustic version of his classic hit, "Message in a Bottle."

After you've visited the song spaces, you can visit the bar and have a drink with Sting as he tells you about the artists that have influenced his music.

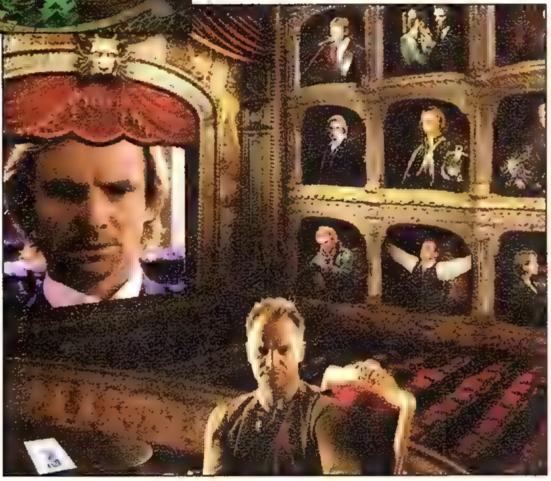
Then you can take a trip to the disc's virtual theater, where Sting will take you on a guided tour of his career in film and give you a preview of his upcoming horror film, *Grotesque*.

Of course, no music CD-ROM would be complete without a merchandise ordering section. Despite the egregious self-promotion, this handsome disc will be just the ticket for fans who can't get enough of this school teacher turned pop star.

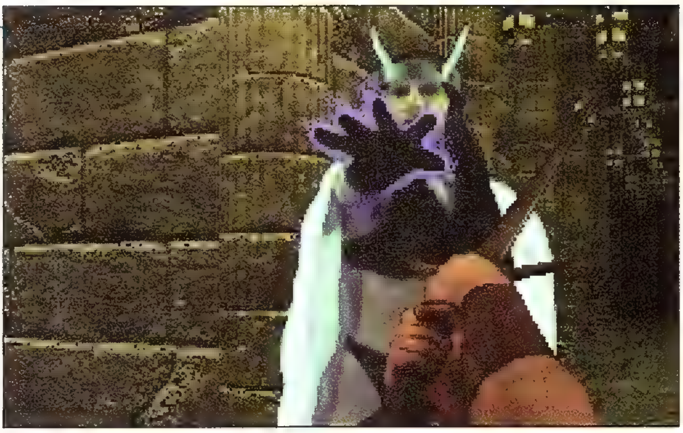
Format: **Windows 95**
Expected Release: **November 1995**
Price: **under $50**
Publisher: **StarWave**
More info: **(800) 521-6263**
(415) 382-4530



As you explore this title, be sure to click on every object before moving on.



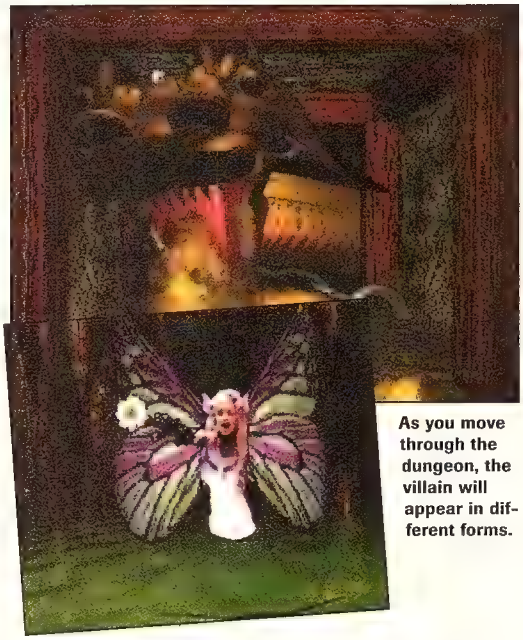
In the theatre. Sting talks you through a tour of his film career.



In *Stonekeep*, it will be your task to save the universe from an evil villain.

Stonekeep

Released after five years in the dungeon



As you move through the dungeon, the villain will appear in different forms.

After five years (that's right, five years) in the making, Interplay is finally releasing its new role-playing game, *Stonekeep*.

Interplay is touting this title as "the most definitive dungeon-crawl experience ever released." After half a decade spent on production and related costs, it had better be.

The game itself will begin with a dramatic film to provide the setting. After your soul has been stolen away by a villain disguised as a goddess, it will be your quest to save the universe from this villain and recapture your soul.

Your journey begins in a dungeon. As you move through the 3D-rendered corridors, you'll have to gather weapons and fight flying monkeys while avoiding rather large and distinctly creepy spiders. The title is also scheduled to feature 13 different domains and a few secret panels to explore.

Although we were only able to see a beta version of this title, it didn't seem to be revolutionary or worth five years in production. It did, however, seem to be an interesting variation on the role-playing game format that will feature some above-average graphic elements.

In addition to *Stonekeep*, Interplay is planning to release *Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster*, starring Tim Curry, this holiday season.

Format: **DOS**
Expected Release: **November 1995**
Price: **$59.95**
Publisher: **Interplay**
More info: **(800) 969-4263**
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Product Information Number 80

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Product Information Number 81

see it on the Disc!

The Cranberries:
Doors and Windows

This enhanced CD is no turkey

King Midas must be alive and well and living with The Cranberries. How else to account for the extraordinary success of these Irish musicians who could barely play their instruments five years ago? If you want proof, check out *Doors and Windows*, the band's first enhanced CD.

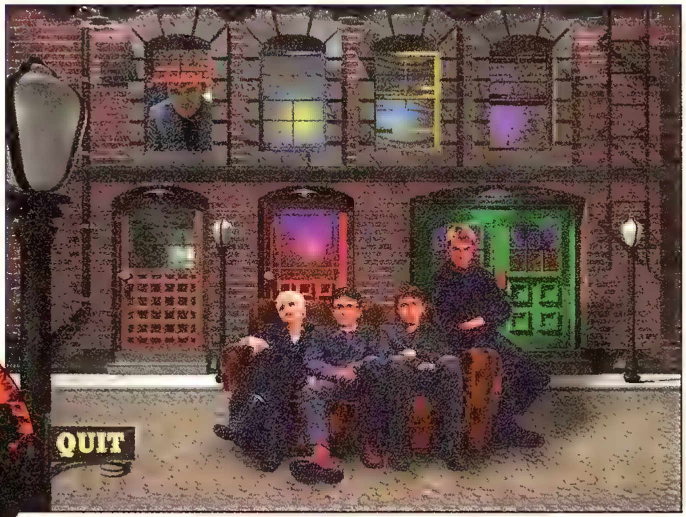
The disc opens on a graphical representation of a cobblestone street. Suddenly, the band pops into the scene—seated on their now-famous couch—in front of a brick wall studded with doors and windows.

If you don't interrupt the instrumental track looping in the background, one of the windows will roll up to reveal a band member making some off-the-wall comment: "I really like Guinness!" says guitarist Noel Hogan, hoisting a Heineken. "Smell no evil," says lead singer Dolores O'Riordan, pinching her nose. Like I said, off the wall.

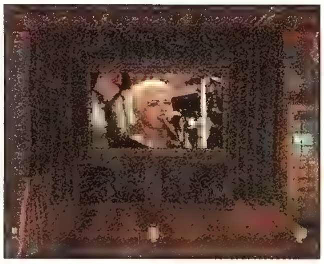
Click on the pictures in the photo album and the band will tell you a little about the shot.

The real fun lies behind each of the three doors, one of which leads to a pub, the other to a hotel room, and the third to a backstage area. Enter these and you'll encounter one or more band members fading in and out of the scene like ghosts treading familiar ground. Click on the objects you see (a photo album, a picture on the wall, an equipment case) and you'll find a little surprise, such as a collection of candid video clips that the camcorder-equipped band shot of themselves while on a recent world tour.

A scrapbook in the hotel room reveals a collection of old photographs, news clippings, and other memorabilia tracing the band's career. The stage in the pub harbors a full-length video of the band performing its poignant hit "Zombie" at Woodstock '94. Play the video on an MPEG-equipped CD-i player and you'll get a full-screen, full-motion picture; otherwise, this and the other videos play in small windows.



The Cranberries' *Doors and Windows* is an intimate look at this pop sensation from Ireland.



The stage at the pub showcases a full-length video of the band performing "Zombie" at Woodstock '94.

Access the CD player on the disc (or drop it into an audio CD player) and you can check out five CD-audio tracks: the previously unreleased "So Cold in Ireland," "Away," and "I Don't Need," as well as several renditions of "Zombie." You'll also get a bootleg-sounding live recording of an incredibly flat O'Riordan singing "Dreams"; only a dyed-in-the-wool Cranfan could possibly enjoy this cut.

Doors and Windows is available for about half the price of the $50 vanity ROMs being produced by other pop acts. Jam-packed with material, this disc is a good value even for the mildest of Cranberries fans.

—Greg Pedersen

WINDOWS/MAC/CD-I/AUDIO CD
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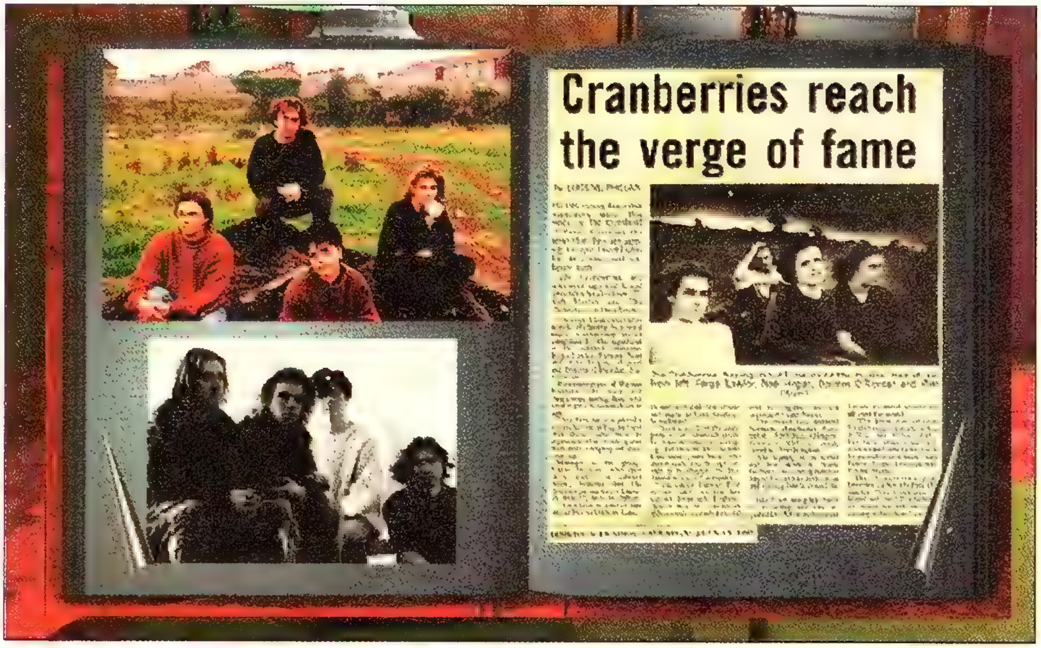
RATING ●●●●

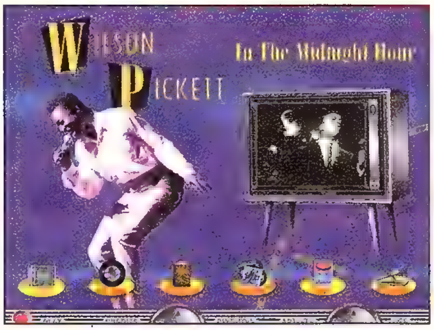


Cranberries reach the verge of fame

This 20-page scrapbook is filled with interesting tidbits about the band's history.

Rhino Rock Expedition; Rhino Soul Expedition: The 1960s

In search of classic wax



Both discs share this extremely clean and functional user interface.

Whether you're old enough to have seen Otis Redding live at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, or your knowledge of twentieth-century music ends with Whitney Houston, you owe it to yourself to check out these two Rhino projects. Those of you who fall into the former category, however, should beware: Extended listening sessions with Iron Butterfly's "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida" have been reported to trigger acid flashbacks.

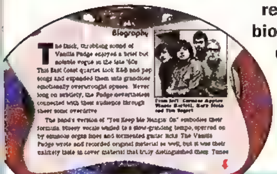
From the catalogs and research efforts of Rhino Records (the reigning rulers of the reissue), Jouissance has pulled together a marvelous compilation of classic tracks from both respected artists and nostalgia acts. Of the two titles, *Soul Expedition* has a high percentage of the former (Sam & Dave, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett), and *Rock Expedition* has a high concentration of the latter (Sonny and Cher, The Beau Brummels, Vanilla Fudge). If you were looking for Jimi Hendrix, The Who, or The Rolling Stones, you won't find them here.

Both discs feature the same clean and functional interface, which opens with black-and-white portraits of each of the artists represented on the disc. Move the mouse over any of these images and you'll trigger a don't-bore-us, get-to-the-chorus recording of the song's hook. Click the mouse and get ready for a ride on the retro.

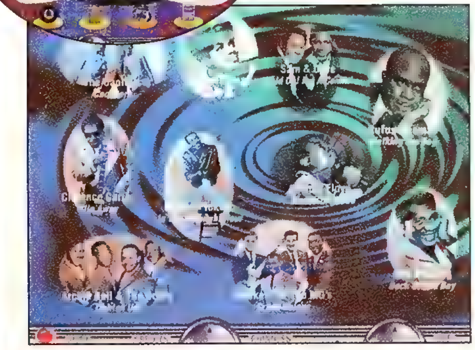
Buttons on the second interface screen lead to music videos (usually taken from a television broadcast), biographies of the artists, trivia collections, and even archive recordings of interviews with the artists. Having all this information is fabulous, but you'll have to read it all off the screen because Jouissance didn't think to include a print utility on the disc.

Aside from that, my biggest gripe about these discs is the price: Compton's needs to shave about $10 off these expeditions.

— *G.P.*



Text entries deliver well-researched biographies, discographies, and trivia entries.



Position the mouse over the artist to hear the hook for which the song is remembered.

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$29.95 each
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(800) 862-2206
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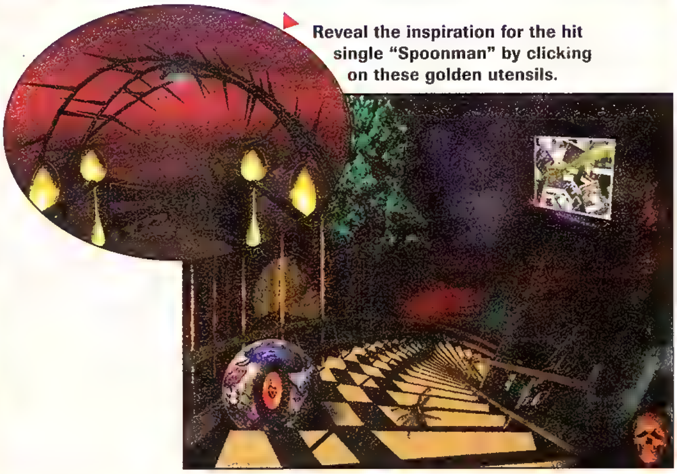
RATING ● ● ●



Reveal the inspiration for the hit single "Spoonman" by clicking on these golden utensils.

Descend the spiral staircase into the nether regions of the *Superunknown.*

Soundgarden: Alive in the Superunknown

Sultans of cynicism stretch the medium

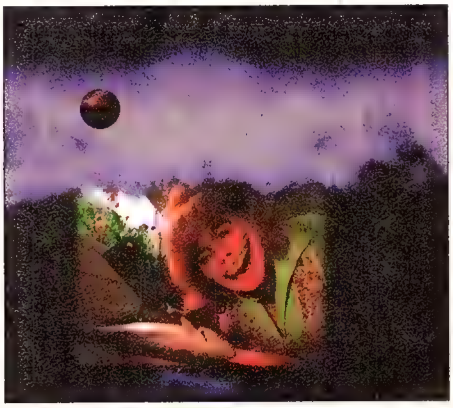
Alive in the Superunknown, the new enhanced CD from grunge masters Soundgarden, is just what the music industry needs to make fans sit up and take notice of the new digital medium. I can't say that it pushes the envelope because the medium is so new that the envelope has yet to be created, but *Superunknown* should be recognized as a road sign for other artists to follow.

The disc opens on what looks like a horror movie set, with the props suspended in space. A spiral staircase and a shrouded, mystical forest are among the four jump-off points to the interactive pilgrimage.

The heart of *Alive*'s interactive appeal lies at the foot of the staircase. Click on the odd assortment of golden spoons to reveal various guitar riffs and sound bites the band recorded specifically for this project. There's even a videotaped performance of Spoonman, the spoon-slappin' Seattle street musician the band saluted on its *Superunknown* audio CD.

Moons over the forest lead you to three music videos (including "Black Hole Sun"). The quality of the disc's non-Red Book audio tracks is surprisingly good, considering they were recorded at a stingy 8-bit/22-KHz sampling rate (Red Book audio CDs are recorded at 16-bit/44.1-KHz). You'll find four of them, including "She Likes Surprises" and an acoustic version of "Like Suicide." The producers did a great job preserving the band's sound.

— *G.P.*



Soundgarden's music video "Black Hole Sun."

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RATING ● ● ● ●

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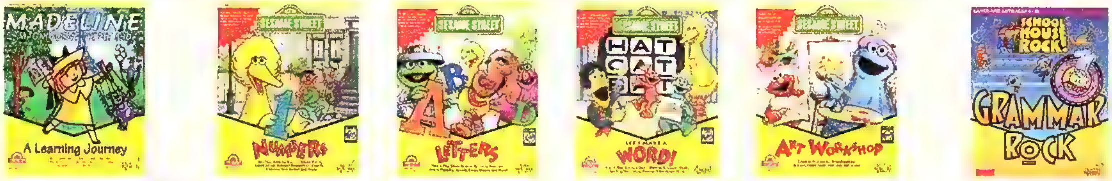
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Product Information Number 118

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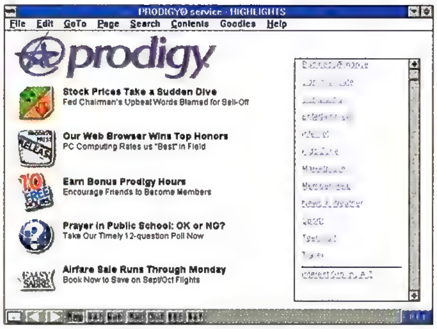
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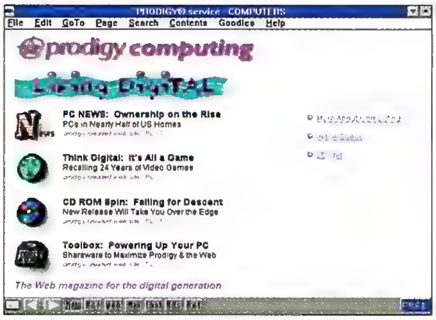
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Think Digital: It's All a Game
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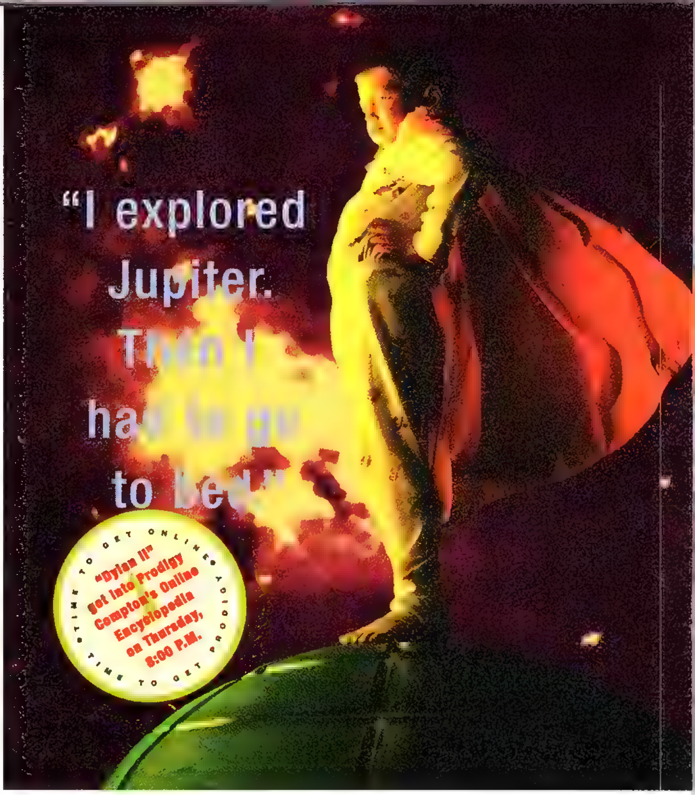
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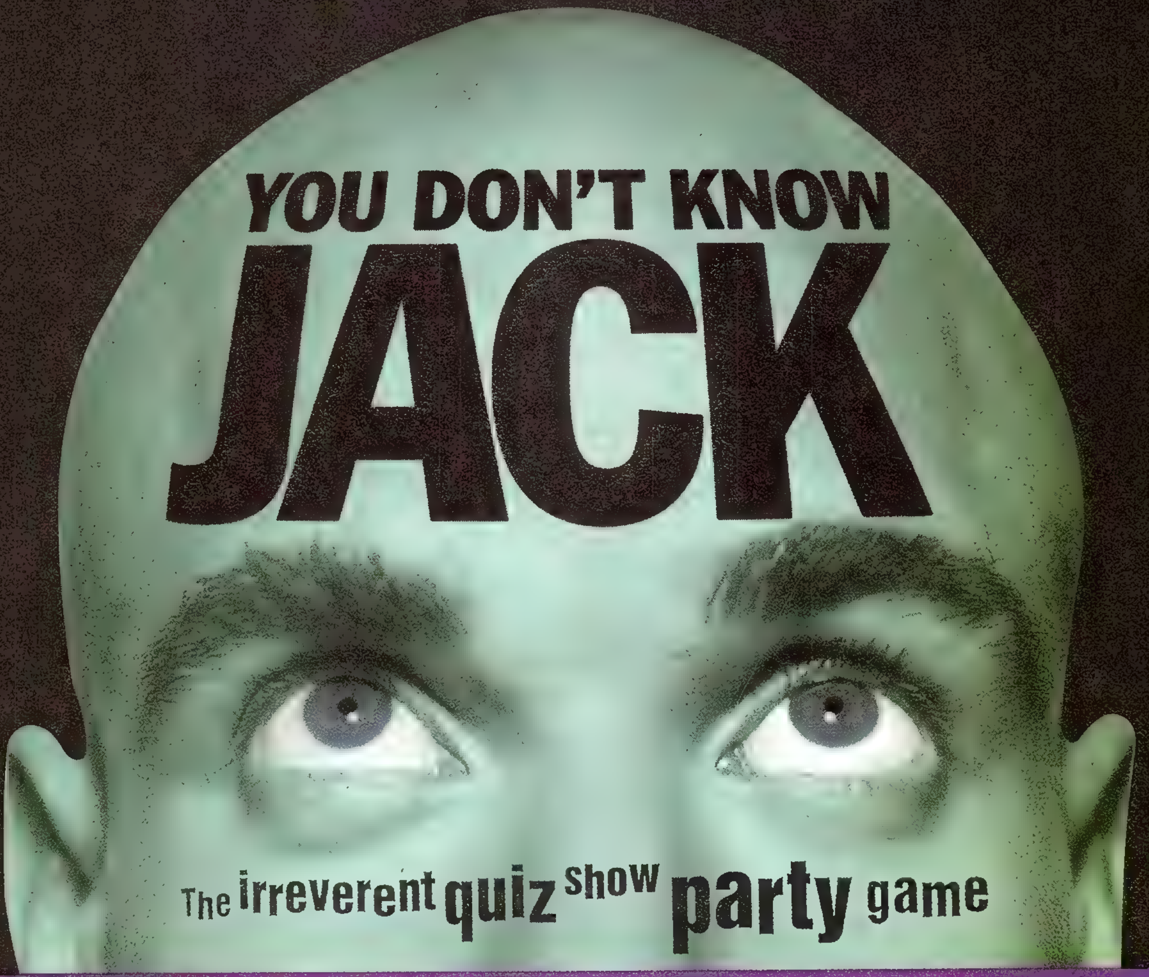
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Product Information Number 96

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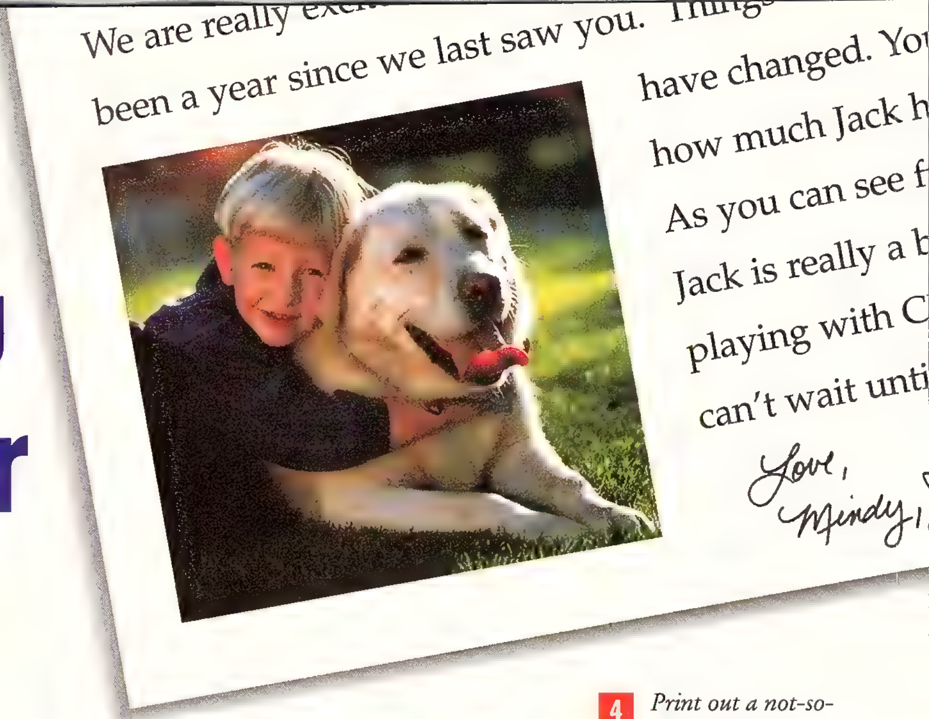

We are really exc
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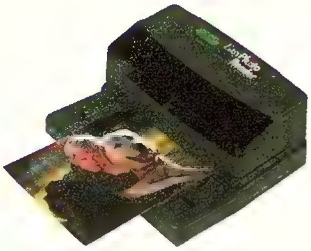
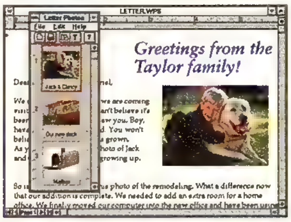
Mindy,





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Product Information Number 179

CHILD'S PLAY

Peter Scisco

The *Wired* Child

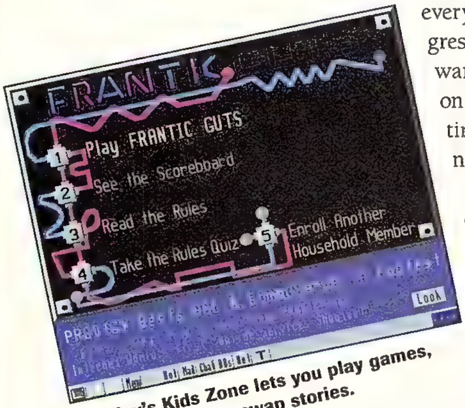
Going online doesn't have to be overly expensive or dangerous. And it doesn't have to remain the exclusive property of adults.

Looking for an interesting gift for your kids this holiday season? I've got a suggestion. Give them a subscription to an online information service.

I know. Right now you're thinking: Has this guy totally lost his grip? Doesn't he know that the information superhighway is inhabited by all kinds of nefarious evildoers and predators pandering porno and violence to innocent children? Does he have any idea what my credit card bill would be?

All right, all right. I get the message. Cyberspace does play host to some bad people. And out on the Net, there's plenty of adult-only material—if you go looking for it. But don't believe every scare article you read, or every shrieking congressional seat warmer you see on C-SPAN. The entire data stream is not afoul with evil.

Nobody expects you to watch your kids 24 hours a day. My wife and I don't sit on the shoulders of our kids. But we do—gasp—let them watch that Power Rangers TV show. You know what? Taylor and Jack don't kick their little friends when they come over to visit. We've used the show to discuss conflict resolution and how girls and boys of all races are equal in possibilities and each deserving of respect (a sorely needed message in a house full of young boys).



Prodigy's Kids Zone lets you play games, enter contests, or swap stories.

The point is, technology can serve us in positive ways. If television can be a tool, so can the interactive medium of an online service. Just think of all the chances you'll get to use their online experiences to teach valuable lessons. For example:

Self-Reliance. Using the homework and educational areas on Prodigy or America Online, show your kids how they can learn to find out answers for themselves. Take time to talk about appropriate online behavior.

Common Ground. When they're part of the on-line community, your kids get a chance to talk with other kids from across the United States and from all over the world. It's no replacement for active play outside with friends, but it's worthwhile nonetheless. The public elementary school my sons attend holds a multicultural fair each year as a social studies exercise. With an on-line service, it can be multicultural day all year round.

Self-Discipline. Don't go overboard with your kids and give them unlimited online access. Cover the standard monthly subscription and tell them that if they go over their allotted amount, they'll have to pay for it out of their allowance or by doing odd jobs. It's a good way to teach them how to budget their time.

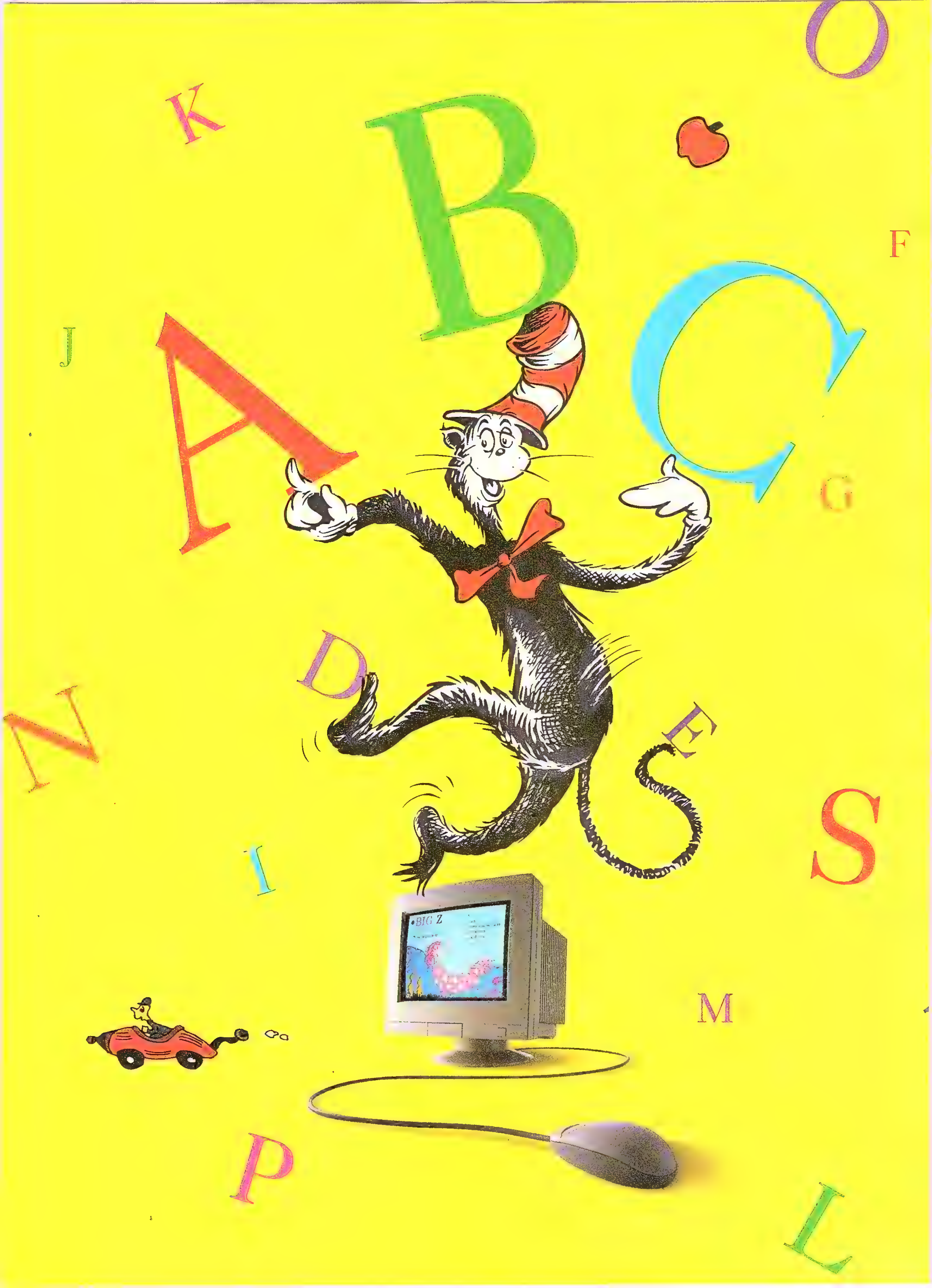
These are just three areas in which your kids can gain valuable knowledge from having an online subscription. But I don't think it's fair just to mention what they can learn without suggesting some places your kids (and you too, if you want to tag along) might like to explore. So here's a short list:

On America Online, check out the Art for Kids gallery by using the keyword *image*. They'll even find crafts and projects by clicking on the B.N. Explorer button. Or, use the keyword *encyclopedia* to open the cyberspace edition of Compton's Encyclopedia, with more than 34,000 articles that will help with any school project.

On Prodigy, jump to *just kids* to enter the Kids Zone, where young cybernauts can converse, play games, enter contests, and trade jokes. When study time comes, jump to *homework*—it's like having the public library drive right to your house.

Finally, if you want to try the Internet, point your Web browser to Uncle Bob's Kids' Page (**http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/kidsi.html**). You and your kids can dive into everything from dinosaurs to kid clubs, and link to Michael Jordan, Super Nintendo, outer space, and everything in between. Or, set your browser for Kids Web (**http://www.npac.syr.edu/textbook/kidsweb/**). This digital library of the world is one of the coolest resources your kids can have for homework and research.

Going online doesn't have to be overly expensive or dangerous. And it doesn't have to remain the exclusive property of adults. Kids can get connected with positive results. They just need a guide in getting there.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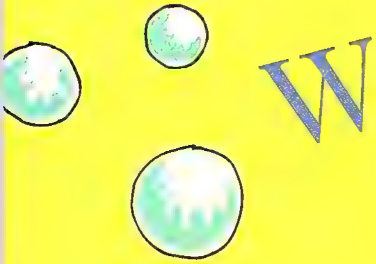

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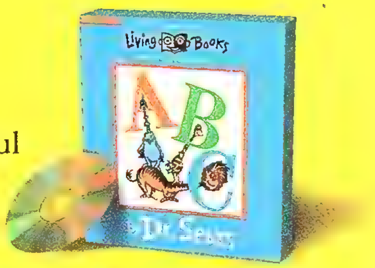

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Product Information Number 148

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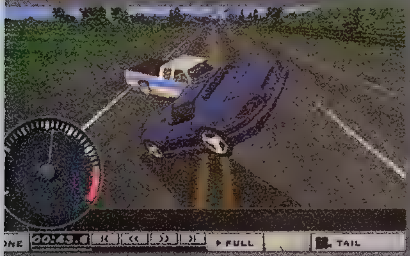

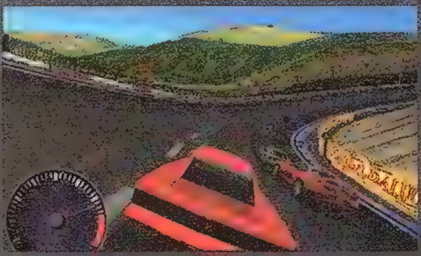

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ELECTRONIC ARTS

PC CD

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THE
SMART
GUIDE

Buying The Perfect Multimedia System

Michael Goodwin

The landscape has changed drastically since the last time you went shopping for a multimedia computer. Here's everything you need to shop smart, buy the right machine, and save yourself a few bucks.

Palms sweating in anticipation, you rip the shrinkwrap from your latest software acquisition. The Internet community has been absolutely abuzz about this title. You've been reading about it for months. "A multimedia milestone!" raved one reviewer. "This one blew me away!" screamed another. You drop the disc into your drive, double-click the install icon, launch the program, and...

"Wait a minute," you say to yourself, feeling puzzled and a little angry. "This video looks like it was shot by Ed Wood. *This* is the state of the art? Gimme a break!"

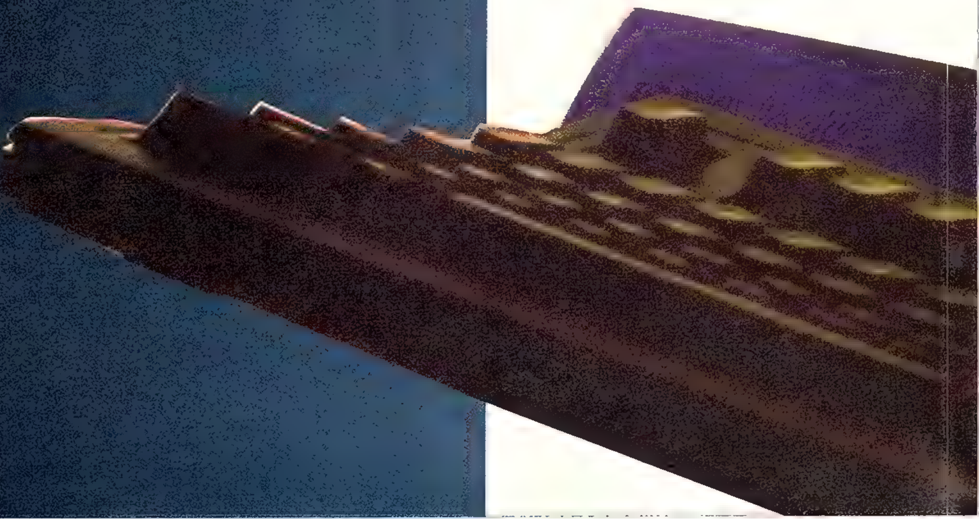
Chances are, the problem lies not with the software but with your system. No application pushes a computer to its limits harder or faster than multimedia, and the latest, hottest titles are designed to perform on state-of-the art machines. If yours is more than a few years old, the newest titles just might outstrip its capabilities—and you can find yourself stuck with sputtering sound, flickering video, out-of-memory messages, and other problems. You might even find yourself staring at a DOS prompt, or a bomb, when you least expect it.

Sure, you could always upgrade: Buy a faster CD-ROM drive or pop for a CPU accelerator and a heap of extra memory. (See sidebar "Upgrading Your PC: Is it Worth It?" on page 63) But if your system is more than two years old; if your PC is powered by a 386—or your Mac by a 68030—or anything less; or if you just want to treat yourself and your family to the *genuine* state-of-the-art, it makes more sense to throw in the towel, retire the old workhorse, and start over with a brand new multimedia system.

Admit it: You really want to.

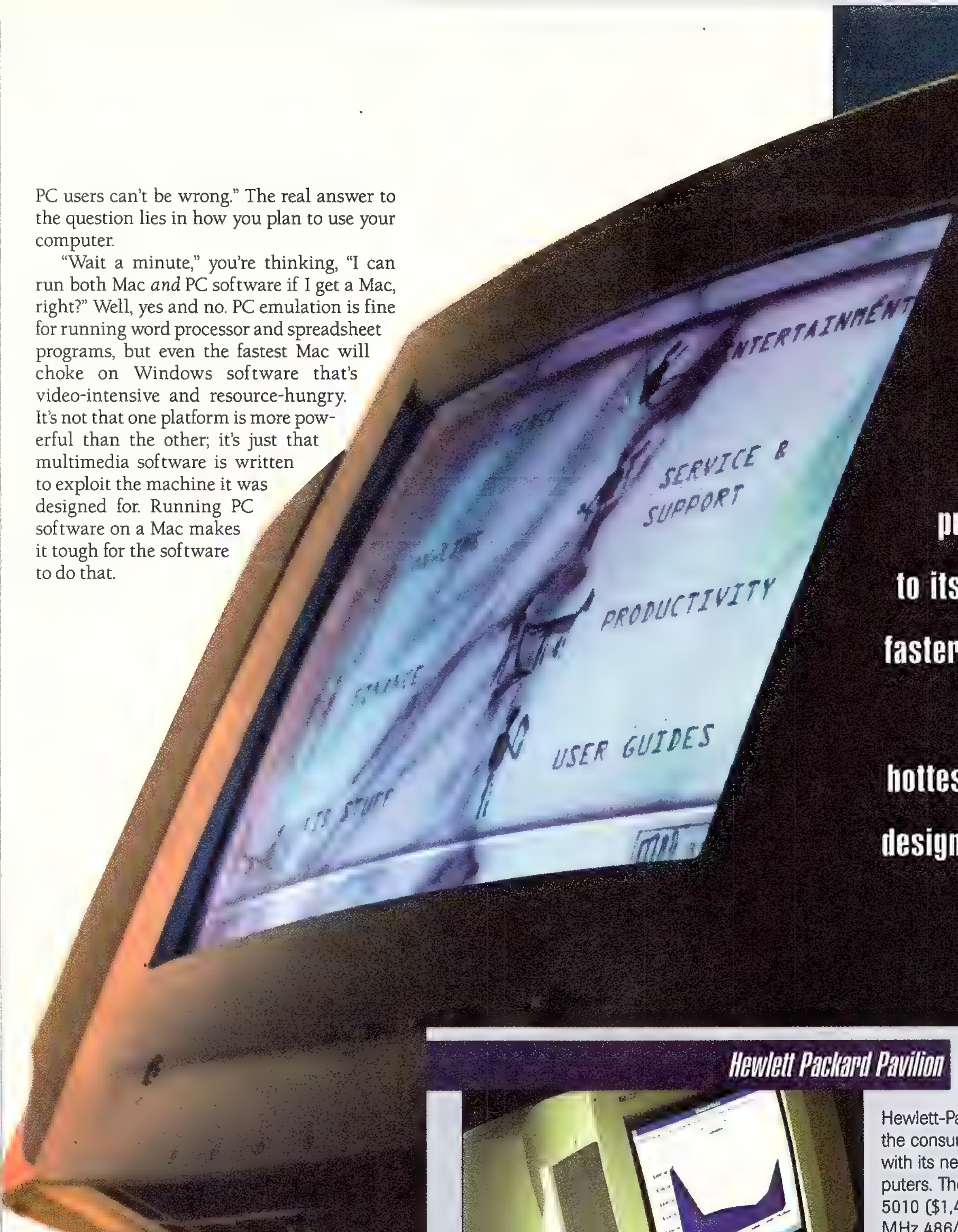
The Fork in the Road

So, you've decided to buy a new computer. Should you get a Mac, or a Windows machine? You'll find zealots on both sides: Your Mac-user friends will say, "Don't even *think* about buying a PC." Your PC-user friends will tell you, "One hundred million



PC users can't be wrong." The real answer to the question lies in how you plan to use your computer.

"Wait a minute," you're thinking, "I can run both Mac *and* PC software if I get a Mac, right?" Well, yes and no. PC emulation is fine for running word processor and spreadsheet programs, but even the fastest Mac will choke on Windows software that's video-intensive and resource-hungry. It's not that one platform is more powerful than the other; it's just that multimedia software is written to exploit the machine it was designed for. Running PC software on a Mac makes it tough for the software to do that.



No application pushes a computer to its limits harder or faster than multimedia, and the latest, hottest titles are being designed to perform on state-of-the art machines.

Hewlett Packard Pavilion

Hewlett-Packard has jumped into the consumer market in a big way with its new line of Pavilion computers. The entry-level Pavilion 5010 ($1,499) comes with a 100-MHz 486/DX4 processor and a 635 MB hard drive. The rest of the Pavilion models feature 75- to 133-MHz Pentiums, 850 MB to 1.6 GB hard-disk drives, and either 14.4 or 28.8 kbps data/fax modems. All models come with quad-speed CD-ROM drives.

YAY! HP's systems come with Altec Lansing speakers that can be mounted onto HP's Pavilion-series monitors.

BOO! Only the high-end Pavilions (100 MHz and up) feature a secondary RAM cache.

Price range: $1,499 to $3,199

Macs Are PCs, Too

Apple's decision to grant other manufacturers licenses to build Macintosh computers was the single most significant event to occur in the Mac market this year. Unfortunately for consumers, the manufacturers who signed up for licenses (Power Computing, Radius, and DayStar Digital) chose to focus on business and professional customers first. All the Macs you'll see in retail outlets this year will have the Apple logo—and the Apple price tag—on them.

Tight Budget, Tight Space

Unless you're a college student or a teacher, you'll find the cheapest Macs in the Performa line. But these models lack a true expansion bus, which means you can't add a high-speed video card or SCSI controller.

If you're on a tight budget, you might be tempted to buy a Performa 630 or 6100. Don't. Apple will soon drop the 68040-powered 630 from its lineup, and since the 6100 is equipped with a lethargic 60-MHz PowerPC CPU, it's a goner as well. Besides, both of these machines have only double-speed CD-ROM drives.

The Performa 6200 is more reasonably equipped. Powered by a 75-MHz PowerPC, with 8 MB of RAM, a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, and a 1 GB hard disk, it costs $2,299. Apple's newest consumer Mac, the Performa 6300, features a 100-MHz PowerPC, 16 MB of RAM, a quad-speed drive, a 1.2 GB hard disk, and a 28.8 kbps modem for about $2,800, including a 15-inch monitor. That's not a bad price, but the machine can't be expanded easily.

Room to Grow

If you need a Mac with real expansion slots, Apple's Power Mac 7200 ($1,699) features the same 75-MHz processor as the Performa 6200, but it offers three PCI expansion slots. That price includes 8 MB of RAM, a 500 MB hard disk, and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive; it doesn't include a monitor, modem, or software.

For the same price, you can buy a Mac clone from Power Computing with a 100-MHz PowerPC and three NuBus expansion slots. Factor in the cost of a monitor, modem, or CD-ROM drive, and the system costs about $2,350.

Apple isn't building systems with NuBus slots anymore, but the installed base of NuBus systems is so large that it will be several years before add-on manufacturers abandon it.

If you're shopping for a Macintosh and don't mind buying through mail order, the low-end expandable Power Computing model is your best choice. If you're the touch-it-before-you-buy-it type, go for the slightly slower, equally expandable Power Mac 7200. Want a no-worries, take-it-out-the-box-and-plug-it-in experience? Buy a high-end Performa.

—Michael Brown

Speaking of software, you'll find about three times more of it for the PC than for the Mac. But you'll also find more shovelware on the PC than on the Mac. (Because the PC boasts a much larger installed base than the Mac, it attracts a higher percentage of low-budget developers.)

Most of the important titles are available for both platforms. You'll find Mac and PC versions of all the major reference and education titles (atlases, encyclopedias, and the like). The major word-processing (*Word*, *WordPerfect*), spreadsheet (*Excel*), database (*Filemaker Pro*), and personal finance applications (*Quicken*) are also available for both Mac and Windows.

If you're buying a computer purely as an entertainment system, or if you just love fast-action, arcade-style games, go out and get yourself a PC. Why? Here again, the PC has a much larger installed base than the Mac, so the hottest games almost always show up on the PC first. There are exceptions, of course—perennial best-seller *Myst* was introduced on the Mac, as were the hits *The Journeyman Project*, and *JumpRaven*—but this is becoming increasingly rare.

Most games that are successful on the PC are ported to the Mac...eventually. The Mac version of *Doom II*, for example, came to market nearly a year after *Doom II* shipped for the PC. The question is: How long are you willing to wait?

If your kids use computers at school, they're probably using Apples (either Macs or something earlier). If you want to make things simple for the kids, buy a Mac. If you want them to learn both types of systems, buy a PC for the home. Even if they're using different software at school, it should be easy to port their data between the two machines.

SMART TIPS

Don't buy extended warranties or service contracts. If a computer is going to malfunction, it will probably does so in the first year—while it's still under the manufacturer's warranty.

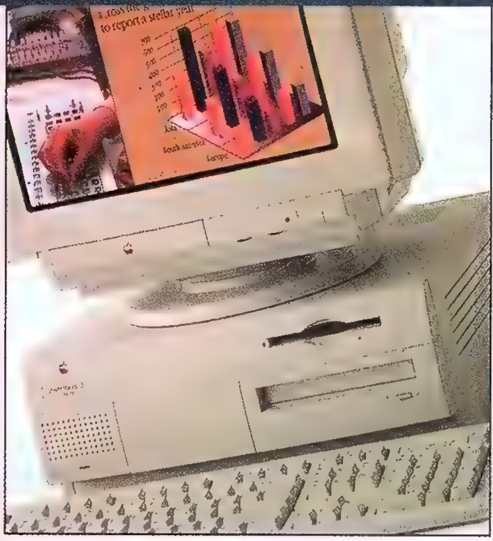
Finally, if you're considering getting into desktop publishing or professional multimedia authoring, your best choice is a Power Mac with an expansion bus for adding professional-quality video-capture and multitrack digital-audio cards. The Mac is the undisputed champ for both of these applications.

Hey, It's Only Money!

OK, you've made the big decision. Now you have to decide how much you can afford to spend on your dream machine. Multimedia software needs a fast computer with fast components. If you're working with a tight budget, a 486 DX2/66 is a cheap date that will show you a good time. You should be able to find a decent system for less than $1,200. (See sidebar, "Macs are PCs, too," for recommendations on Macintosh computers.)

Move slightly up the performance ladder and you'll find machines in the $1,700 to $2,000 range powered by 75- and 100-MHz 486 DX4s. But both of these solutions will soon lead you back to the situation you're in now: craving something more powerful.

Apple Performa



Apple finally licensed other manufacturers to build Mac clones, but you won't see any of them in consumer retail outlets. You will see Performas and Power Macs. The CPUs in the consumer-oriented Performas range from 33-MHz 68040 processors to 100-MHz PowerPCs. Hard-disk drives range from 500 MB to 1.2 GB.

YAY! Each of the Performa models includes a monitor with at least a .28 mm dot pitch.

BOO! None of the Performas include NuBus or PCI expansion slots, which makes them difficult to expand.

Price range: $1,199 to $2,800

Compaq Presario

Compaq's Presario line features 75- to 133-MHz Pentiums, quad-speed CD-ROM drives, 1.0 to 1.6 GB of hard-disk storage, and 8 to 16 MB of RAM. Speakers are not included (except for the built-in 3-watt speakers in the 5500 series).
YAY! Hardware-based MPEG video decompression provides rock-steady MPEG video playback, while the wavetable synthesizer into every model except the 5528 delivers high-quality sound.
BOO! The entry-level Presario 5500 series has only two ISA slots and *no* PCI slots, which means you can't take advantage of some high-speed peripherals.
Price range: $1,999 to $2,999

What makes the most sense? Take the plunge and buy at least a 75-MHz Pentium system. Prices for these systems should start somewhere around $1,800. These days, the sweet spot in the PC market—where you'll get the most bang for the buck—is a 90-MHz Pentium. Better-known nameplates and faster configurations can boost the price tag into the $3,000 plus range, but you won't have to worry about next year's econo-box blowing the doors off your hot rod.

What to Look For

Whether you buy a PC or a Mac, look for these key features:

Memory Multimedia needs plenty of RAM for top performance. Don't buy a system with less than 8 MB—and get 16 MB if you can squeeze it into your budget (especially if you're going to run Windows 95 now or Apple's Copland operating system later.)

Secondary RAM cache A RAM cache speeds up your system by keeping the most recently used system instructions in a special type of super-fast RAM. Even the smallest RAM cache will deliver a big performance boost, but a big 256K cache is best.

Hard-Disk drive Most multimedia applications provide the option of installing some files to your hard disk to speed performance. But those files can be *huge*, so don't buy a computer with less than 500 MB of hard disk space; 1 GB is a better idea.

CD-ROM drive Buy at least a quad-speed drive. Otherwise, you may have problems getting video and audio off the CD-ROM fast enough—which can lead to sound sputters, video flickers, and other multimedia headaches.

SMART TIPS

Avoid falling into the trap of signing up for the dealer's credit card. Once the salesperson knows your credit limit, you can bet he or she will sell you enough components to max out your account.

Monitor A sharp 14-inch monitor (.28 mm or smaller dot or stripe pitch; $300 and up) is adequate, but you'll enjoy a 15-inch model ($400 and up) much more. A 17-inch model ($800 and up) is fabulous if you can afford it. Try to avoid buying a monitor with built-in speakers; they won't sound nearly as good as stand-alone speakers. (See the multimedia monitor buyers' guide "Sight and Sound," October 1995, for additional monitor-buying tips.)

Video cards On the PC, make sure that the video card complies with the MPC2 spec; in other words, at least 16-bits (65,536 colors) at standard VGA resolution (640 x 480). Video memory is also an important consideration: Most systems come with 1 MB of VRAM; 2 or more MB of VRAM will enable your system to display more colors at higher resolutions. Expensive, high-performance cards (32 and 64 bit) offer even more colors, more speed, and higher resolutions.

Nearly all Macintoshes come with video built into the motherboard. Therefore, if you think you'll ever want to upgrade your Mac's

"MY PRINCE HAS COME.
HE'S GOT GORGEOUS MUSCLES
A STRONG PROFILE
A SPANDEX WARDROBE
AND SOLID CAREER GOALS LIKE..."

5 Reasons to Buy a New Computer

Buying a new system makes sense in a number of ways. Here are five good arguments you can use to justify satisfying your lust for new hardware:

1 **Performance:** Multimedia titles flat out perform better on the latest, coolest technologies. Many of these new technologies must be built into the motherboard, so unless you go for the dreaded motherboard transplant (Don't! It's too much like building a new system from scratch, and it's hardly ever worth the trouble), the only way you can get your hands on all the latest stuff is with a brand new system.

2 **Plug and play:** This technology has long been one of the Mac's biggest selling points because it takes all the hassle out of adding new hardware to your computer. Now, Microsoft is touting the plug-and-play features in Windows 95, but the only way to get genuine plug and play on a PC is to buy a new system with a plug-and-play BIOS on the motherboard.

3 **Avoid upgrade perils:** If you buy a new CD-ROM drive and it refuses to function with another vendor's sound card, you might discover that each vendor thinks it's the other vendor's problem. That makes it your problem. Buy a new system and you'll know everything will fit and everything will work. If it doesn't, you'll have just one company to deal with.

4 **Warranty:** A new machine comes with a new warranty. Pick the right vendor and you might even score a one-year on-site service deal: No more lugging all those heavy components back to the store because something went wrong.

5 **That new-car feeling:** Sure it's irrational, but it's always a treat. And don't you think you deserve it?

Acer Aspire

Acer wowed the industry with the sculptured lines and designer colors of its Aspire series, priced from $1,299 to $2,799. The entry-level of the line is powered by a 100-MHz 486/DX4 processor and a 540 MB hard drive; the rest of the line features 75- to 133-MHz Pentiums and 850 MB to 1.6 GB hard-disk drives. A RAM cache is offered on only the top two models.

YAY! On-site service is available during the first year of Acer's three-year warranty.

BOO! The entry-level model comes with only a double-speed CD-ROM drive.

SMART TIPS

If your system doesn't include a monitor, don't feel compelled to buy one from the same manufacturer as the computer; chances are, you'll find a better value elsewhere, especially via mail order.

video capabilities, you should buy a Power Mac that has expansion slots. (*None* of Apple's consumer-oriented Performa models have expansion slots.)

Local bus video This issue applies to PCs only. Most new video cards feature slick graphics chips that are designed to make Windows graphics fly: Don't hobble the card by forcing it to operate at the poky 8-MHz speed of an ISA slot. Buy a system with local bus video (a special high-performance expansion slot), and make sure the video card that comes with the machine *uses* the local bus.

Audio The sound of multimedia is just as important as its look. Macs come with built-in audio capabilities; most PCs don't. Look for a PC equipped with a good 16-bit wavetable sound card. Cheap sound cards tend to generate hiss and hum, and they generally have thin-sounding FM MIDI synthesizers that make multimedia audio sound like it's coming out of a one-transistor radio. Wavetable cards create rich, exciting sound by using stored samples of digital recordings of real instruments. If your system of choice has only an FM sound card, consider upgrading it before you bring it home.

If you plan to play DOS games (especially older ones), make sure the card can emulate a Sound Blaster. DOS games don't always come with device drivers for every new card, but they *all* support the Sound Blaster.

Speakers Buy cheap speakers and you waste all the money you spent buying a good sound card. The only way to know if you like a set of speakers is to listen to them. Crank up the volume to make sure the speakers don't distort at high levels.

Many otherwise excellent systems come with cheap speakers. If that's the case, swallow hard, toss the speakers, and buy better ones. If the speakers are built into the monitor, make sure you can turn them off.

You can buy a pair of decent, powered speakers for about $100. Personally, I like the slightly more expensive three-way speaker sets that consist of two small satellite speakers and a beefy subwoofer to fill in the bass. The small satellites consume almost no desk space, and you can hide the subwoofer across the room or behind the couch. You can find these systems for less than $200, but if you can't spring for a set, look for speakers that have a subwoofer output, so you can upgrade later. (For more information on multimedia speakers, see "Aural Delights," August 1995.)

Expansion slots Macintosh Performas have a single expansion slot, which is suitable for a CPU accelerator, video capture card, MPEG decoder, or other device. Installing one of these device precludes you from installing any of the others. If you anticipate becoming a multimedia author, you'll want to avoid the Performa line in favor of something more robust (a Power Mac 7200 or higher, or one of the Power Mac clones from Power Computing, Radius, or DayStar Digital).

Portable computers offer more flexibility than desktop models, but at a price. A fully loaded 75-MHz Pentium portable might start at about $4,000. You should also factor in $300 to $600 more for an external monitor.

Most PC systems come with a plethora of expansion slots, some of which may already be occupied by video, sound, and drive controller cards. Assuming that your machine already has these devices installed, you should make sure it has no fewer than three *unused* slots, so you can add a SCSI controller, a hardware MPEG decoder (software MPEG decoders aren't nearly as good), or other handy peripherals in the future.

Where to Spend Your Dough

You've decided which computer you want. You have your list in hand. Now it's time to go shopping. These days, your choices are broader than ever: You have at least six sources to choose from.

- If you're an experienced user, buying through mail order is probably the cheapest route. You'll get to choose from the widest variety of systems, ranging from well-known brands to nameplates you've never heard of. Most of the sales people at mail-order dealers are helpful and friendly, but don't count on bargaining: You'll discover prices are pretty much set in stone.
- Another means of mail-order shopping is to buy direct from the manufacturer. Some of the majors, including Micron and Gateway, sell only direct; others, such as Compaq, sell both direct and through retail channels.

Although you're limited to a single manufacturer, buying direct can save you big bucks. If you're a good horse trader, you might even be able to knock a few bucks off the quoted price or convince them to install a brand-name component in place of a cheaper one. You might also ask about the availability of heavily discounted, refurbished demo units (make sure you're still getting a full factory warranty).

In both scenarios, you can sometimes avoid a sales tax obligation if you buy from an out-of-state firm. But be sure to ask about shipping costs; you might discover that they offset your tax savings.

Buying a system sight unseen requires a little research. How well does the machine perform? Is the manufacturer known for producing a quality product? Is service and support up to par? Check back issues of comput-

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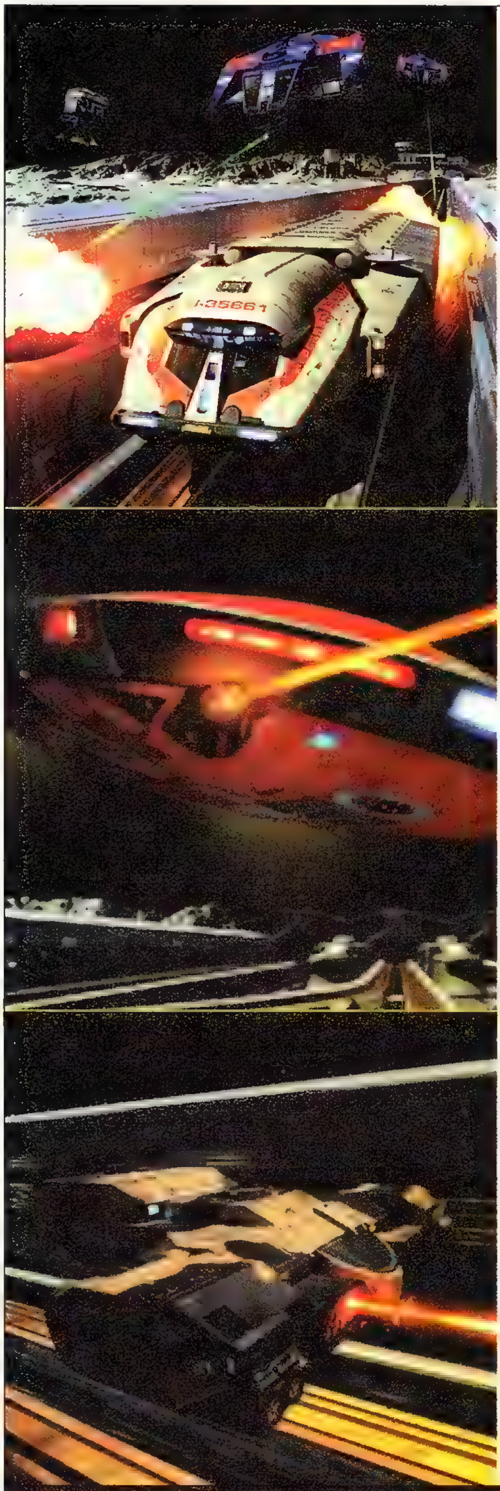

TRAVEL TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE GALAXY, OUTRUN THE POLICE, CRASH TWO SPACESHIPS, EVADE NED BEATTY, AND BE BACK AT YOUR DESK BY 9:00.

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PC CD

Product Information Number 172

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er magazines for comparative reviews, and ask your online neighbors for their opinions.

■ Do you really know your way around the innards of a computer? Then you can save even more by having a local clone manufacturer or independent dealer build you a system from scratch. On the up side, you'll get exactly as much—or as little—computer as you want. Specify the right models of name-brand parts and you *could* end up with a great bargain-basement system. On the down side, it's virtually impossible to obtain comparative performance reviews of made-to-order clones.

Local stores also have less of a reputation to lose if you're unhappy with their work. And if they go out of business, your warranty might go down the drain with them. Protect yourself by specifying namebrand components whose manufacturers offer their own warranties. You should also ask the local chapter of the Better Business Bureau how long the store has been in business and if any complaints have been lodged against it.

■ If you know *exactly* what you're looking for, you can often find good prices at warehouse stores such as Office Depot, PriceCostco, and Sam's Club. What you might not find is sales people, knowledgeable or otherwise. You also won't find a wide selection of add-on components, configuration options, or software. You should remember that these types of stores cater to small businesses; you'll often find time-management and bookkeeping software bundled with these computers instead of family-oriented titles.

■ If you don't feel comfortable dealing with a mail-order firm, or don't have the specialized knowledge to custom-design a system, you'll find a relatively broad selection of systems at computer superstores such as CompUSA and Computer City. Their prices won't be as low as mail order—and your choice of options, memory, and multimedia peripherals will be more limited—but you can lay your hands on the stuff before you fork out all that green. Some of these stores offer their own brand of clones, but I wouldn't recommend buying any system for which you can't obtain independent, comparative performance specs.

The quality of the help you'll find in these outlets is inconsistent at best. You'll encounter the occasional exception, but don't count on these people to enlighten you or to help you make a decision about which system to buy.

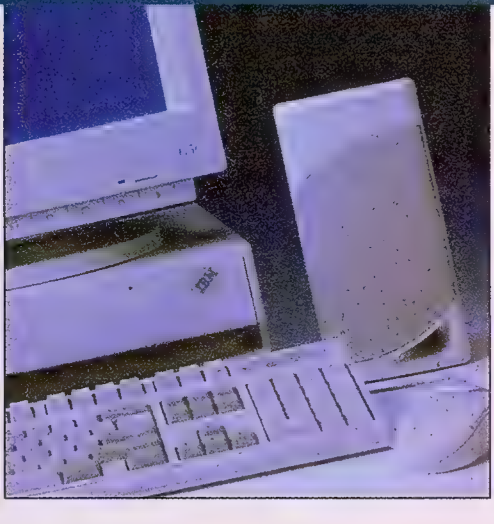
■ Mass merchants such as Sears and consumer electronics stores such as Circuit City now sell personal computers alongside their TVs, VCRs, and microwave ovens. You'll find the selection here to be a little smaller than that of the superstores—especially when it comes to peripherals—but you will find it easier to get help. Unfortunately, you might find that you know more about computers than the "trained sales counselor" who's helping you. This is especially true during the holidays, when these stores bolster their staff with seasonal help.

That's not to say that all of these people are nitwits and numskulls. The best ones take their work seriously and make an effort to stay

SMART TIPS

Buying a system for a college student? Some manufacturers, Apple in particular, offer substantial discounts to student buyers. You can pick up information on such offers at the college bookstore.

IBM Aptiva



IBM's Aptivas feature 75- to 133-MHz Pentiums, quad-speed CD-ROM drives, 1.0 to 1.6 GB of hard-disk storage, built-in wavetable synthesizer, decent 30-watt speakers, and a cool voice-recognition feature that lets you bark commands at your computer. **YAY!** All the Aptivas come with fast modems and a diagnostic system that lets IBM techs troubleshoot the machine and talk to customers at the same time. **BOO!** IBM is shipping most of its Aptivas with PC DOS 7.0; Windows 3.11; and OS/2 Warp—not Windows 95.

Price range: $1,799 to $2,999

Upgrading Your PC: Is It Worth It?

Should you upgrade your PC, or wait for next year's model? It all depends on how old your system is. If it's relatively new, it probably has local bus video built onto the motherboard; it might even have a plug-and-play BIOS. In that situation, an upgrade can deliver a hefty performance bump, and it's comparatively cheap.

On the other hand, if your system is more than two years old or powered by old technology (386 or less), it's probably not worth the money. Generally, if the price tag for the upgrade begins to approach half the cost of a new system (which will usually be more than twice as fast), you should avoid it. Here are the most cost-effective ways to wring more life out of your PC without breaking the bank.

RAM: Upgrading system memory is probably the smartest multimedia upgrade you can make. You'll want at least 8 MB, and 16 MB if you're running Windows 95. Current prices are hovering around $35 per MB.

CPU: If your 486 system has plenty of RAM, adding an Intel OverDrive processor can double or triple your processing speed—and boost overall performance 25 to 30 percent. A DX2, which doubles processing speed, runs in the neighborhood of $150. A DX4, which triples processing speed, will cost somewhere between $200 and $300.

CD-ROM drive: If your current drive is double-speed or slower, upgrade to quad-speed ($200 to $300). An 8X drive is the state of the art, but most software won't really take advantage of it.

Video: If you don't already have a Windows accelerator, get one. If your video card won't produce 16-bit color at 640 x 480 (the MPC2 standard), buy one that does. Naturally, 32- and 64-bit cards are even better. If your board accepts additional video RAM, an upgrade to 2 MB or 4 MB will deliver more colors at higher resolutions. Fast cards range in price from $200 to more than $400.

Sound card: If your existing card doesn't feature a wavetable synthesizer, you can either replace it with one that does or upgrade it with a wavetable-synth "daughterboard" from a company like Creative Labs, Roland, or Yamaha. Both options start at about $150, but the daughterboard solution means you don't have to worry about compatibility problems with your CD-ROM drive if your drive controller is built into your sound card. You can easily spend $300 or more for a higher-end sound card (and get more for it).

New motherboard: Resist the temptation. If you're going to rip out the power supply and most of the rest of your PC simply to drop in a new motherboard, you might as well buy a new system.

12 Shopping Do's and Don'ts

1 **Make a checklist** before you hit the stores—or the phone.

2 **Shop mid-week** and during less busy times, so you can get a salesperson's attention.

3 **Shop for the right salesperson.** Test them by asking questions for which you already have the answers, and move on if they fail to meet your standards.

4 **Be wary of sales people** who push a particular manufacturer or model; they may be receiving a cash incentive to sell that brand.

5 **Comparison shop.** Prices can differ quite a bit from store to store, even at mail-order shops. Clip ads: Most stores will match or beat their competitor's prices—even after the sale.

6 **Remember shipping costs** and sales tax; they can add up to a significant chunk of change.

7 **Check the configuration** to ensure all the components you need (monitor, keyboard, mouse, disk drives, speakers, and memory) are included in the quoted price.

8 **Bang on the keyboard,** eyeball the monitor, and listen to the speakers. If you can't do that, get written authorization to swap 'em if you don't like 'em.

9 **Ask about a money-back guarantee** if you just don't like the system. A 30-day free-return policy is fairly common—just make sure you don't get stuck with shipping and/or restocking fees.

10 **Get the price in writing**—including tax and shipping. If shopping by phone, have them fax the configuration you ordered.

11 **Pay by credit card**; then if there's a problem, your credit card company will help you resolve it.

12 **Don't fool yourself**: If the deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Packard Bell

The most notable feature of Packard Bell's line is the wedge-shaped model designed to tuck neatly into a corner. The entry-level model features a 75-MHz Pentium and a 540 MB hard drive. The rest feature 100- to 133-MHz Pentiums, 8 to 16 MB of RAM, and hard drives up to 2.1 GB.

YAY! A cool but optional remote lets you control the CD-ROM drive and television/radio tuner installed in some models.

BOO! Most Packard Bell machines use unified memory architecture instead of a secondary RAM cache. This shaves a few bucks off the cost of their systems, but it also reduces the computer's overall performance.

Price range: $1,299 to $2,899

informed. Be aware, however, that these folks make their living from sales commissions, and they stand to earn as much as one-third of their annual salary between November and mid-January. Put yourself in the driver's seat by testing their knowledge: Ask them a few questions about multimedia and computers for which you already know the answers (e.g., "What's the difference between a wavetable sound card and an FM sound card?"). If they don't measure up, find someone else to help you. Above all, don't allow yourself to be pressured into buying something you're not absolutely sure of.

No matter where you shop, ask about price guarantees. Most retailers will guarantee that you won't find the computer you buy offered for less money anywhere within 30 days of purchase. If you're buying the machine during the holidays, you can make the store start the 30-day clock on December 25. Don't get complacent after you've bought your machine: It pays to shop every ad during those 30 days.

Know that the seller will insist that the two advertised systems are identical, right down to the titles in the software bundle. That's part of the reason that the configuration you see at PriceCostco might differ ever so slightly from the one you'll see at Circuit City.

Buying Smart

Buy a high-priced system from a big-name vendor and you can be reasonably sure of getting a solid machine. The trick is to buy *smart,* which means getting an equally solid machine for less money from a good, up-and-coming company.

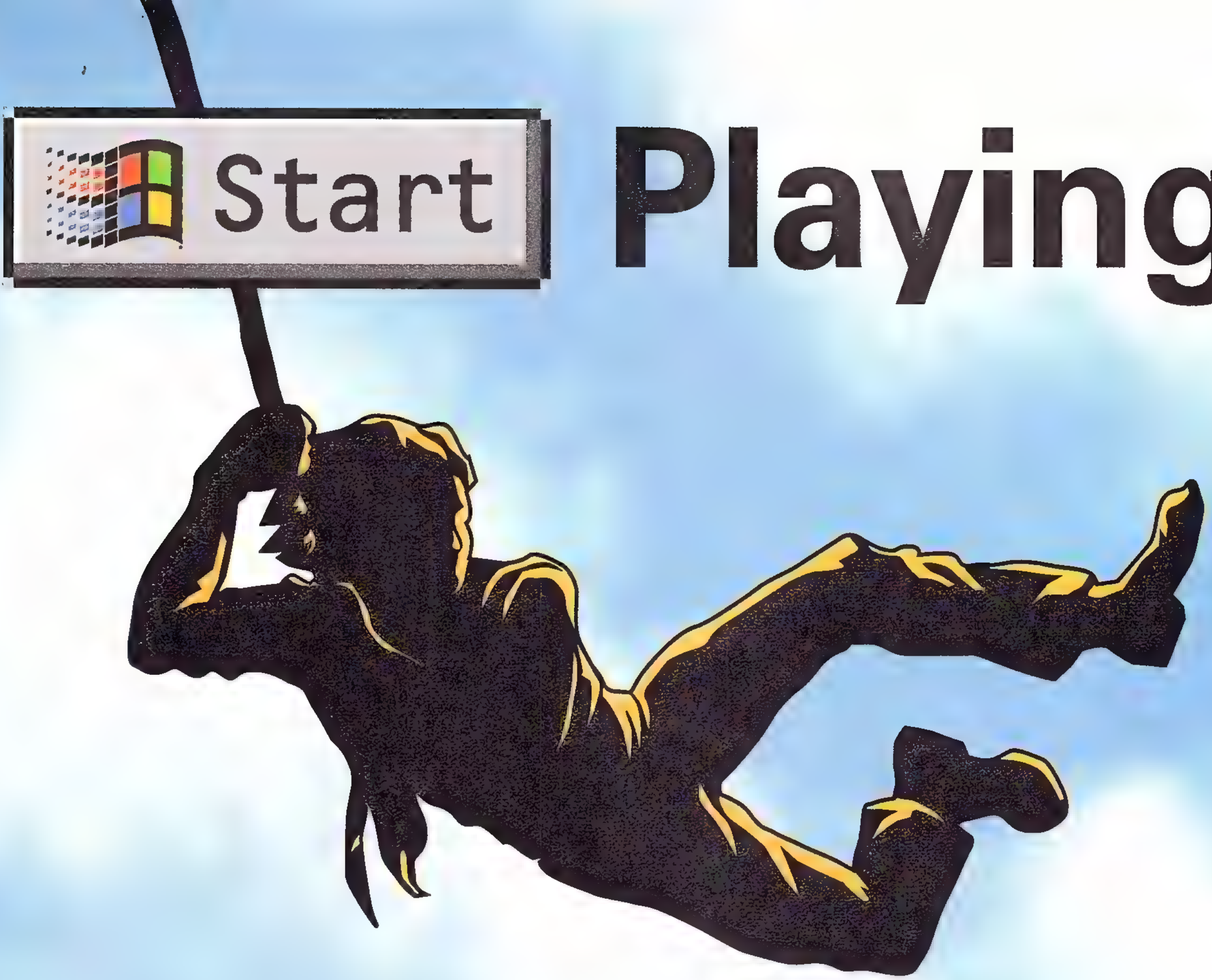
SMART TIPS

Take the stated value of software bundles with a hefty grain of salt; the true value of these packages is nearly always much less.

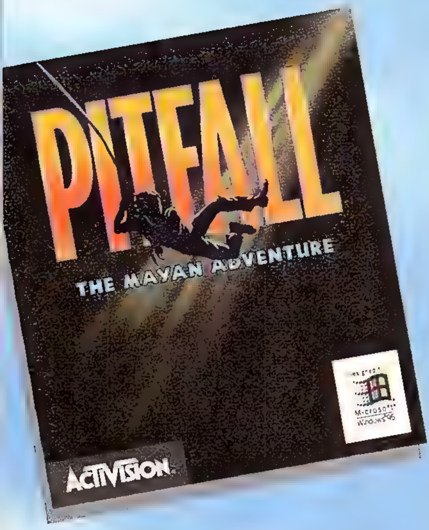
Do a little research before you buy anything. Online resources offer up-to-the-minute information on computer companies and systems. If you subscribe to CompuServe, take a look at the CompuServe Buyers Guide for current prices and company profiles (Go COMPDIR). If you have an Internet connection, fire up your Web browser and surf on down to the Internet Shopping Network (**http://shop. internet.net**) for a huge catalog listing. You can also post inquiries in the multimedia forums on CompuServe, America Online, or Prodigy.

Buying a computer is not unlike buying a car. You can get carried away if you're not careful and wind up spending a lot more money than you intended. The key is to decide how much computer you need—and can afford—*before* you go shopping, while your cooler head prevails.

Michael Goodwin is a freelance writer in New Orleans. His new book, Making Multimedia Work, *was published by IDG Books Worldwide in October. Michael Brown is* CD-ROM Today's *Reviews Editor.*



Playing!



Start having fun on Windows® 95 with *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure*—13 thrilling levels, fantastic side-scrolling gameplay, stunning animation and a truly incredible soundtrack. Because the best reason to upgrade to Windows® 95 is...**playing!**

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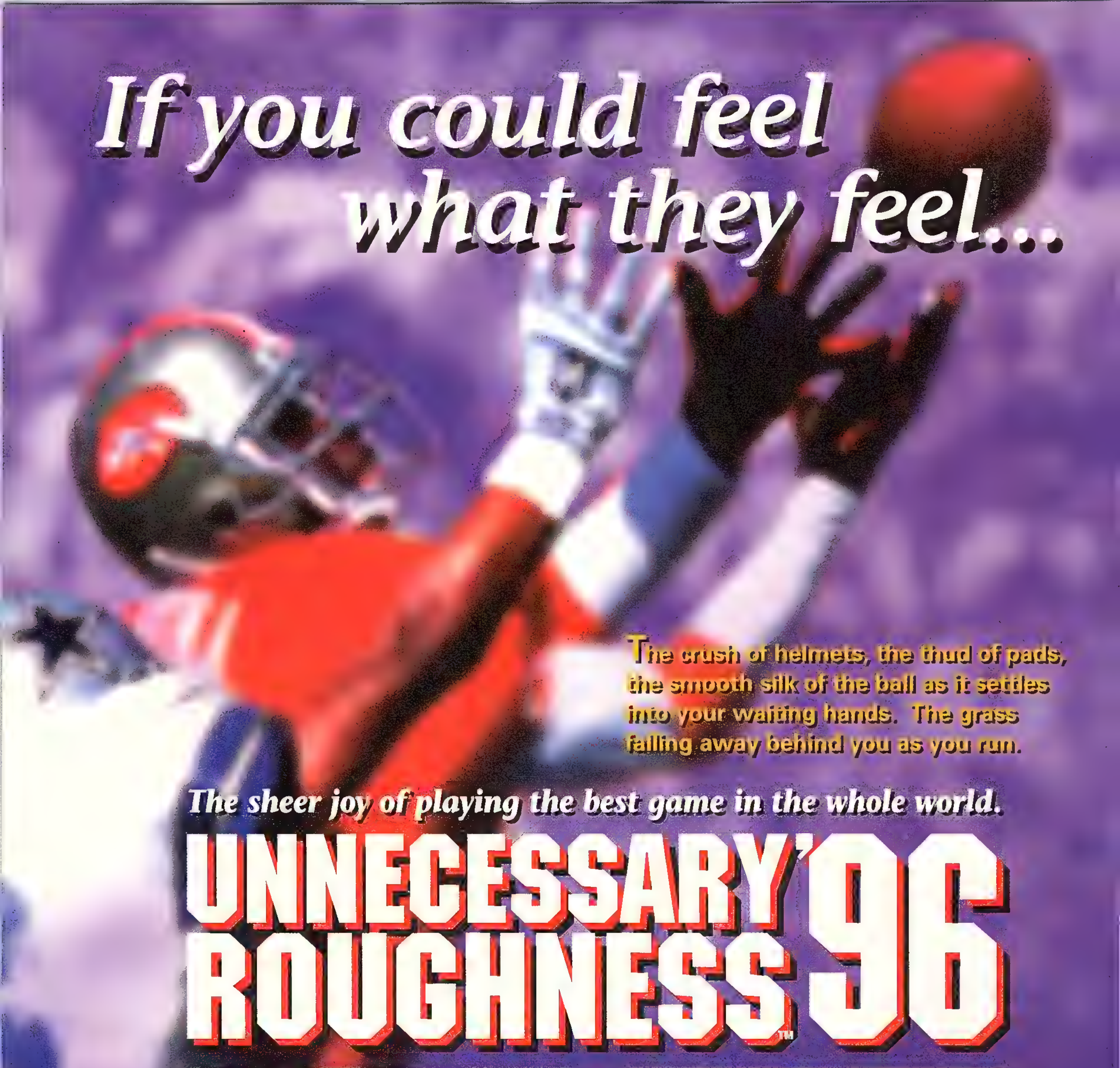
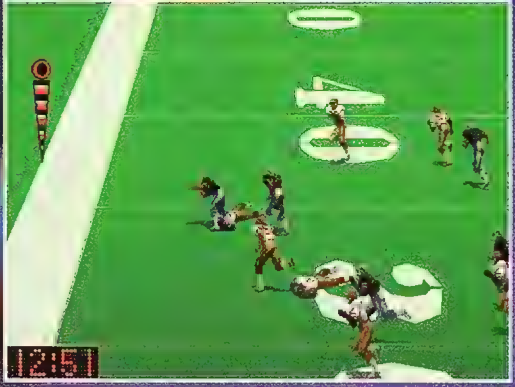


If you could feel what they feel...

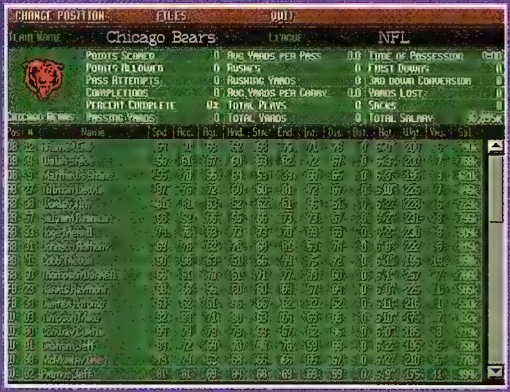
The crush of helmets, the thud of pads, the smooth silk of the ball as it settles into your waiting hands. The grass falling away behind you as you run.

The sheer joy of playing the best game in the whole world.

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS'96™



Take on the best of the NFL! All-new player animations and realism are your ticket to true NFL football competition – a quantum leap over its predecessors!



Team Name Chicago Bears League NFL

Points Scored 0
Points Allowed 0
Pass Attempts 0
Completions 0
Percent Complete 0%
Passing Yards 0
Avg Yards per Pass 0.0
Rushes 0
Rushing Yards 0
Avg Yards per Carry 0.0
Total Plays 0
Total Yards 0
Time of Possession 0:00
First Downs 0
3rd down Conversion 0
Yards Lost 0
Sacks 0

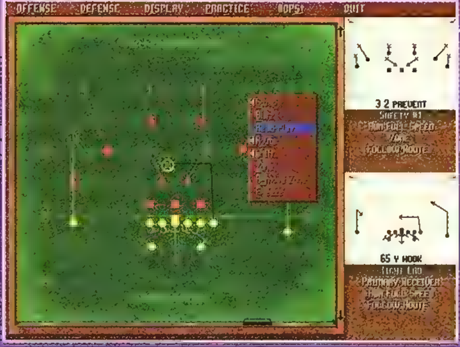
If you really want to take charge, the expanded General Manager and stats options put all the excitement and strategy right at your fingertips!

Special Limited Time Offer. Competitive Upgrade Offer! Good Only Until November 30, 1995. Call 1.800.245.7744 Mention offer number UR96-113.
Owners of previous versions of Unnecessary Roughness or any existing PC football game can upgrade. For 800# orders you must have a copy of the previous or competitive product with you to verify ownership.

Just when you need to jam it over the line or flatten a tackler, the new "Oomph" button delivers!

FILES
DISPLAY WEEK
GAME SUMMARIES
QUIT
PLAYOFFS

Go into action with 30 NFL teams and more than 1300 NFL stars. Unnecessary Roughness '96 has it all!



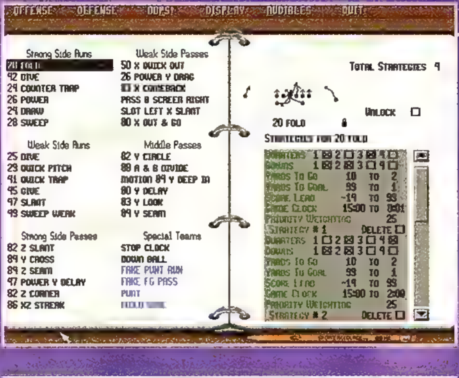
Develop a devastating offense and a smothering defense with the most complete set of play design tools!

83 CARTER,MARK
88 METZELAARS,PETE
16 GREEN,WILLIE

Enjoy the fast-action automatic pass reception, or keep your opponent on his toes with the real-time "Pro" passing mode.

QB 19 MITCHELL,SCOTT

See every play up close and personal – back angles, reverse angles, side angles, even helmet cameras!



Strong Side Runs
20 FOLD
42 DIVE
24 COUNTER TRAP
26 POWER
24 DRAW
28 SWEEP

Weak Side Runs
25 DIVE
23 QUICK PITCH
41 QUICK TRAP
45 GIVE
47 SLANT
49 SWEEP WEAK

Strong Side Passes
82 Z SLANT
84 Y CROSS
84 Z SEAM
47 POWER Y DELAY
82 Z CORNER
86 XZ STREAK

Weak Side Passes
50 X QUICK OUT
26 POWER Y DRAG
[illegible] X COMEBACK
PASS B SCREEN RIGHT
SLOT LEFT X SLANT
80 X OUT & GO

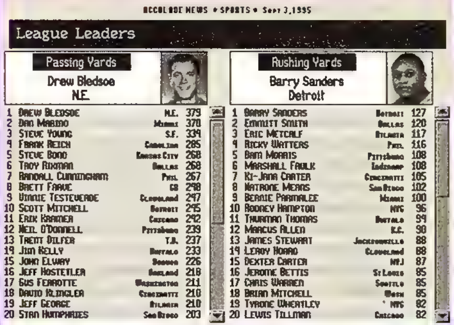
Middle Passes
82 Y CIRCLE
88 A & B DIVIDE
MOTION 84 Y DEEP IN
80 Y DELAY
83 Y LOOK
84 Y SEAM

Special Teams
STOP CLOCK
DOWN BALL
FAKE PUNT RUN
FAKE FG PASS
PUNT
[illegible]

TOTAL STRATEGIES 4
UNLOCK ☐
20 FOLD
STRATEGIES FOR 20 FOLD

QUARTERS 1 ☒ 2 ☐ 3 ☒ 4 ☐
DOWNS 1 ☒ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☐
YARDS TO GO 10 TO 2
YARDS TO GOAL 99 TO 1
SCORE LEAD -19 TO 99
GAME CLOCK 15:00 TO 0:01
PRIORITY WEIGHTING 25
STRATEGY # 1 DELETE ☐
QUARTERS 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☒
DOWNS 1 ☒ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☐
YARDS TO GO 10 TO 2
YARDS TO GOAL 99 TO 1
SCORE LEAD -19 TO 99
GAME CLOCK 15:00 TO 2:00
PRIORITY WEIGHTING 25
STRATEGY # 2 DELETE ☐

Set up your game plan; even add audibles! Test your plays against any kind of lineup. You're in control, right down to the nitty gritty!



ACCOLADE NEWS • SPORTS • Sept 3,1995

League Leaders

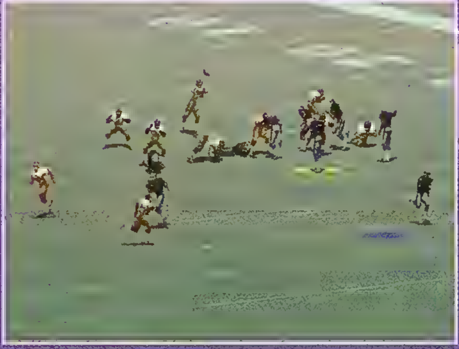
Passing Yards
Drew Bledsoe
N.E.

1	DREW BLEDSOE	N.E.	379
2	DAN MARINO	Miami	370
3	STEVE YOUNG	S.F.	334
4	FRANK REICH	Carolina	285
5	STEVE BONO	Kansas City	268
6	TROY AIKMAN	Dallas	268
7	RANDALL CUNNINGHAM	Phil.	267
8	BRETT FAVRE	GB	248
9	VINNIE TESTEVERDE	Cleveland	247
10	SCOTT MITCHELL	Detroit	245
11	ERIK KRAMER	Chicago	242
12	NEIL O'DONNELL	Pittsburg	239
13	TRENT DILFER	T.B.	237
14	JIM KELLY	Buffalo	233
15	JOHN ELWAY	Denver	226
16	JEFF HOSTETLER	Oakland	218
17	GUS FERROTTE	Washington	211
18	DAVID KLINGLER	Cincinatti	210
19	JEFF GEORGE	Atlanta	210
20	STAN HUMPHRIES	San Diego	203

Rushing Yards
Barry Sanders
Detroit

1	BARRY SANDERS	Detroit	127
2	EMMITT SMITH	Dallas	120
3	ERIC METCALF	Atlanta	117
4	RICKY WATTERS	Phil.	116
5	BAM MORRIS	Pittsburg	108
6	MARSHALL FAULK	Indianap	108
7	KI-JANA CARTER	Cincinatti	105
8	NATRONE MEANS	San Diego	102
9	BERNIE PARMALEE	Miami	100
10	RODNEY HAMPTON	NYG	96
11	THURMAN THOMAS	Buffalo	94
12	MARCUS ALLEN	K.C.	90
13	JAMES STEWART	Jacksonville	88
14	LEROY HOARD	Cleveland	88
15	DEXTER CARTER	NYJ	87
16	JEROME BETTIS	St Louis	85
17	CHRIS WARREN	Seattle	85
18	BRIAN MITCHELL	Wash	85
19	TYRONE WHEATLEY	NYG	82
20	LEWIS TILLMAN	Chicago	82

Check out the game summaries and look over stats during season play. Over 100 different stats and ratings!

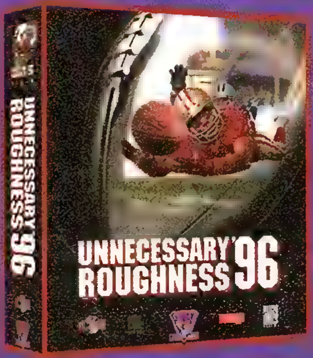


With:
- new player animations
- league-leading stats
- expanded plays
- General Manager options

Unnecessary Roughness '96 delivers the ultimate in hard-hitting football action!

INSTANT REPLAY
PLAYBACK STATUS
STOP
CAMERA SUBJECT
FOOTBALL
San Francisco
vs.
DALLAS COW

The replays are almost as much fun as the plays themselves! See action on-screen like never before with unlimited camera angles!



Team NFL

PLAYERS INC

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Product Information Number 85

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AFTER FOUR YEARS IN THE MAKING,
A BUDGET OF OVER FIVE MILLION
AND THE TALENTS OF MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED INDIVIDUALS...
THE ADVENTURE, THE FANTASY AND
THE MAGIC IS AT HAND.

ON NOVEMBER 8, 1995
THE EXPERIENCE BEGINS.

STONEKEEP
STONEKEEP
STONEKEEP
STONEKEEP

Full-screen graphics let you feel the full intensity of your quest.

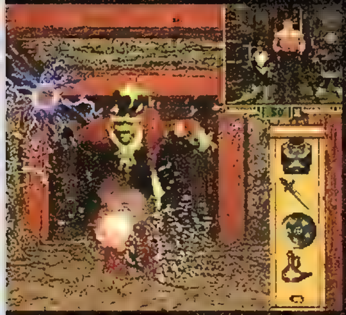
Step into the mystery of Stonekeep and begin a quest through dark corridors, treacherous sewers and subterranean realms of fairies, magic and the living dead. You'll discover a world where darkness reigns and where you become part of an in-depth storyline that unfolds at your command. Defeat evil, reclaim your immortal soul and experience the adventure that is Stonekeep.

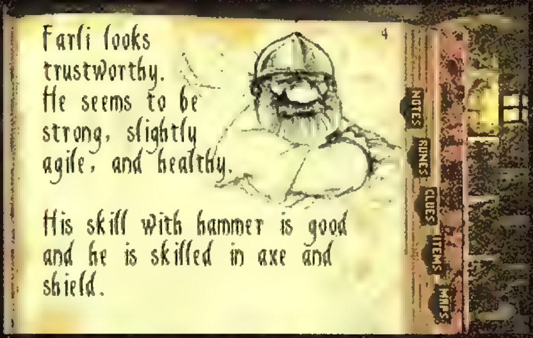
It's an epic experience more powerful and realistic that anything you've imagined. Using innovative new technology, Stonekeep draws you into its dark reaches so completely you'll forget it's just a game. Your hands will wield weapons of metal and magic. You'll battle disembodied foes, rescue your allies from evil, liberate a massive dragon from bondage and discover an experience more realistic than anything you've ever imagined.

Hollywood special effects, heart-pounding music and 3-D effects will draw you into this epic adventure.

An epic production more than four years in the making, Stonekeep comes in a very special, limited-edition tombstone box with a hologram cover. It also includes the first chapter in the Stonekeep saga – *Thera Awakening*, a hard-bound novella, by Steve Jackson and David Pulver.

"By Gamers, For Gamers." is Interplay's slogan and Stonekeep is the kind of game we've always wanted to play. It looks fantastic, sounds great and tells a really good story. It's one of those games you'll stay up playing until three in the morning on a work night. Basically, it's just a whole lot of fun... and to us, that's what games are all about.





Farli looks trustworthy. He seems to be strong, slightly agile, and healthy.

His skill with hammer is good and he is skilled in axe and shield.

An intelligent journal keeps track of characters encountered and clues you've heard and automatically maps your travels.

SEE YOUR LOCAL SOFTWARE RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-INTERPLAY

ACTUAL IBM SCREENSHOTS SHOWN.

Interplay™

BY GAMERS, FOR GAMERS.™

17922 Fitch Avenue, Irvine, CA 92714

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SSP1

Product Information Number 143

CHIP:

108 CHIPS PER BAG

1,350 CALORIES

64 GRAMS OF FAT

PIZZA:

8 SLICES PER PIZZA

2,320 CALORIES

70 GRAMS OF FAT

PYRAMID:

30,000 PYRAMIDS
IN 150 LEVELS

0 CALORIES

0 GRAMS OF FAT

ICEBREAKER

an addiction you can live with

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE IN ACTION AND STRATEGY.
EASY TO LEARN. DIFFICULT TO MASTER.

Shareware version available @ http://www.magnet.com

THE ADDICTION BEGINS IN NOVEMBER ON PC AND MAC

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Product Information Number 129

The CD Home Office

Looking for the right software for your home office? These 20 CD-ROMs can help you get down to business – without costing you a bundle.

Kathy Yakal

Maybe you finally decided to turn that spare bedroom into a home office. Or perhaps a major downsizing at your company changed your status overnight to self-employed. Or your benevolent employer decided that telecommuting would be good for your sanity. Whatever the reason, if you're outfitting a new home office—even on a tight budget—you might be surprised at how much small-business software is available on CD-ROM.

Want some help balancing your books? Take your pick from a half dozen or so personal finance and small-business accounting discs. Looking to gather info in cyberspace? CD software will take you there. Need an information manager or national phonebook? It's all on CD-ROM.

CD-ROM-based software offers several clear advantages over its floppy cousins. It's far easier to install and it provides a nearly indestructible backup. Plus, CD-ROM software often cost no more than the floppy versions and comes jam-packed with additional reference material and multimedia content. For example, Intuit used the extra

N7631C
SONY

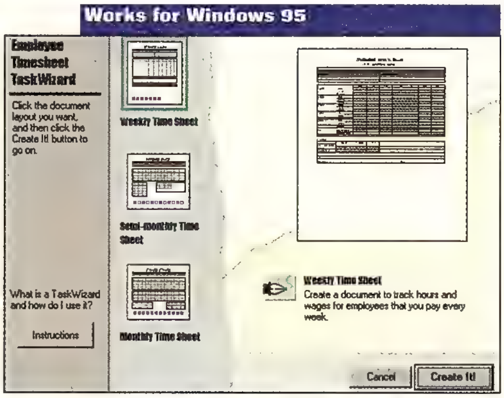
megabytes in its CD-ROM version of *Quicken* to add a mass of multimedia financial advice. Best of all, CD-ROM software is usually cheap: Many titles cost less than $100.

We've picked a selection of what we consider the best choices for outfitting your home PC. (Macintosh users should check out "There's No Mac Like Home," below.) Of course, any list is a matter of personal taste, and some of your favorite applications may not yet be available on CD-ROM, but the following CDs are certain to get your home office off to a flying start.

Suite and Light

First things first: Virtually everybody needs a word processor, spreadsheet, and database to run an office. But the dumbest thing you can do is buy each application separately. An integrated package or an office suite will get you all these apps and more for a fraction of what they cost individually.

If you simply need to write letters or track a few numbers, buy an integrated package. One of our favorites is *Microsoft Works* ($54.95 for Windows 3.1; $79.95 for Windows 95). *Works* combines a simple word processor, spreadsheet, and database manager under a single interface; it also adds a general reference tool (*Microsoft Bookshelf 95*) and a communications program. Works' is designed so that data can be shared among all the applications. The *Works 95* version offers extra goodies, such as Wizards that walk you step-by-step through the process of creating memos, spreadsheet formulas, and more.



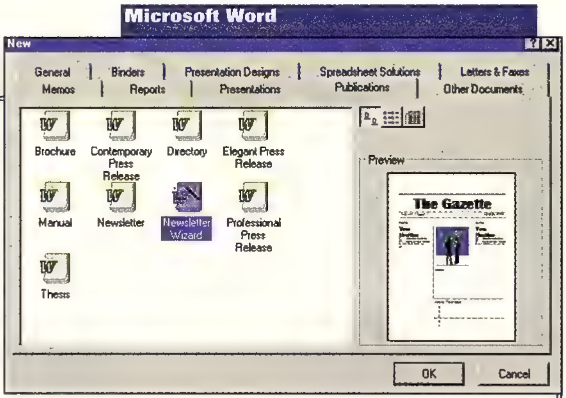
Click the document layout you want, and then click the Create It! button to go on.

What is a TaskWizard and how do I use it?

Weekly Time Sheet

Create a document to track hours and wages for employees that you pay every week.

Works for Windows 95 **Wizards provide frameworks for documents like employee timesheets. You provide the information, and Works molds it for you.**



Microsoft Word**, one of the applications included in *Microsoft Office for Windows 95*, contains dozens of templates for creating business documents, with a preview function that lets you see what a finished product might look like.**

If you need to create sophisticated documents or perform heavy data analysis, save yourself some hassle and buy an office suite. All the major software vendors offer collections of their flagship word processors, spreadsheets, and databases for a significant discount. While Lotus *SmartSuite* and Novell's *PerfectOffice* are fine choices, we prefer *Microsoft Office*, thanks to its excellent integration, automation, and the strength of its core applications.

The *Office* CD comes jam-packed with five apps: *Word* (word processor), *Excel* (spreadsheet), *PowerPoint* (presentation program), *Access* (database manager), and *Schedule+* (scheduling program). All of *Office*'s applications are OLE-capable, so if

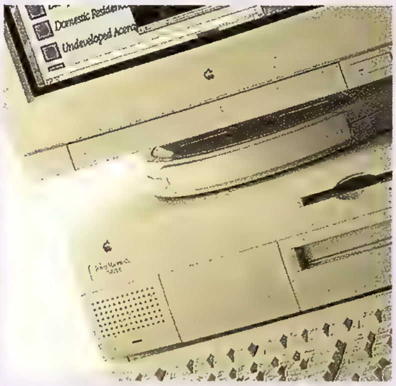
There's No Mac Like Home

Outfitting a Macintosh home office is no different than equipping one with a PC (except that, being a Mac user, you're just a little bit more hip). Your software needs are virtually identical to those of your Windows cousins, and so are many of the programs.

The essentials. First, you'll need the standard business applications: a word processor and a spreadsheet. There is no better Mac suite on the market than *Microsoft Office*. The $500 CD pack comes with *Word*, the standard in Mac word processing; *Excel*, the only full featured Mac spreadsheet; *PowerPoint*, a presentation package, and the Microsoft Office application, which allows easy integration among the various packages. The package also contains some excellent macro-making and customization software. Just be aware that all this power comes at a price: You'll need at least 8MB of RAM to run even one of these programs, and 16MB to take full advantage of the integration the suite provides—plus 70MB of hard disk space for the full install.

Money talks. One of the most difficult elements of running a home office is taking care of the books. Enter *Quicken*. This enormously popular package, currently at version 6.0, allows you to easily maintain the books for a one- to five-person office, managing cash flow with a simple checkbook metaphor. It does take some time initially to get all your info entered in *Quicken*, but once you go through that one-time process, updating is a snap, and with *Quicken*'s excellent graphing and reporting features, you can see where all that money goes, too.

Dial tones. Besides your Mac, the most important tool for your business is probably the phone—and phonebooks on CD-ROM are a great help for any office. There are two excellent phone discs on the market, DDA's *PowerFinder* and Pro CD's *SelectPhone*. Each costs around $180 on the street, with quarterly subscriptions for $400 (*SelectPhone*) to $500 (*PowerFinder*). Both let you search by name, phone number, street address, ZIP code, and more—just try that with a standard phone book. But their real power lies in their marketing potential. Want to tailor a direct mailing to every record store in Sudbury, Massachusetts? Enter a few search criteria and up pops a list, ready for you to export. In general, I find *PowerFinder* faster and more accurate, and *SelectPhone* easier to use.



Road gear. Need to take your office on the road? Check out *Street Atlas USA* by DeLorme. This $170 map on disc goes from small to extremely large scale—the vendor claims it contains every street in the country, from Market Street in San Francisco to I-75 to Mulberry Lane in Williamsport, Indiana. This is another disc that you'll find yourself using more and more as time goes on.

Log on. To make sure your home office is competitive, you need to be able to access all the information a large corporation can. The best way to keep up in the information intense 90s is with a direct connection to the Internet. Ventana Press's $70 *Internet Membership Kit* will give you everything you need to get on the Net, including an Internet account, connection software, a World Wide Web browser, a newsgroup reader, and more.

There are a lot more great CDs out there, but the discs mentioned here will get your Mac home office off to a great start.

– Christopher Charla

GET READY FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE!

☞ ☞ ☞ WHEN INSCAPE BRINGS YOU... ☜ ☜ ☜

THE RESIDENTS'

BAD DAY ON THE MIDWAY

CD-ROM™

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- AMAZING 3-D ANIMATION BY JIM LUDTKE
- ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK BY UNDERGROUND LEGENDS THE RESIDENTS
- INTELLIGENT 3-D CHARACTERS

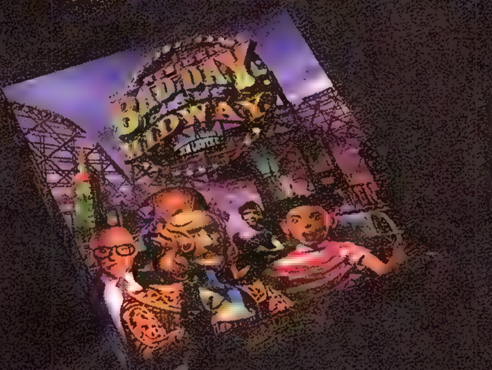
DESIGNED AND ANIMATED BY
JIM LUDTKE

THIS UNIQUE ROLE-PLAYING GAME TRANSPORTS YOU TO A **CARNIVAL OF THE DAMNED** WHERE THE CHARACTERS ARE THE RIDES

DODGE DEATH AND TAXES WHILE SOLVING A MYSTERY OF MURDER AND INTRIGUE IN A WORLD POPULATED BY TEN UNFORGETTABLE CAST MEMBERS

CHOOSE TO BECOME DIFFERENT CHARACTERS AND EXPLORE THE INCREDIBLE ARRAY OF **ATTTRACTIONS AND ODDITIES** AS YOU ATTEMPT TO UNRAVEL THE **MIDWAY'S DARK SECRETS**

- FLYING NAVIGATION SPEEDS YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION
- BE THRILLED AND AMAZED AT THE MIDWAY ATTRACTIONS
  - KILL A COMMIE SHOOTING GALLERY
  - MARVELS OF MAYHEM
  - OSCAR THE RACING RAT
  - TORTURES TOP TEN



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Visual Entertainment

INSCAPE

Product Information Number 141

COMING DECEMBER FOR PC CD-ROM

The face that launched a thousand starships.

"Best game I've ever been in!" Harika, Alien

"Visually rich—a captivating sequel!"

Fred Ford and Paul Reiche III,
Designers – Star Control and Star Controll II

STAR CONTROL 3

THE FATE OF A THOUSAND WORLDS IS IN YOUR HANDS...AGAIN.

ACCOLADE

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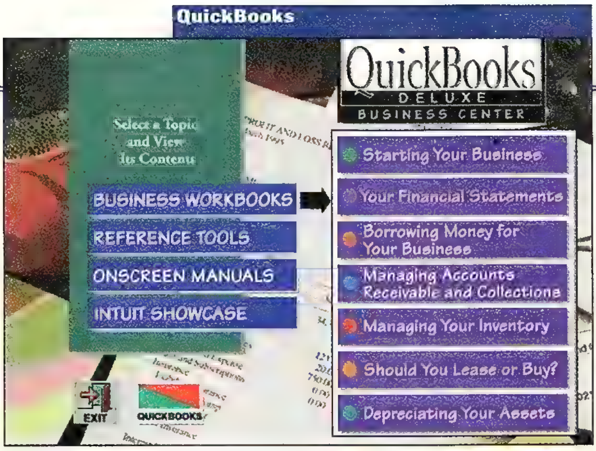
Created by Legend Entertainment and based upon characters created and used under license from Paul Reiche III and Fred Ford.

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+

Product Information Number 86

QuickBooks

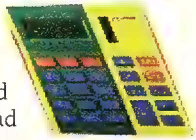

QuickBooks
DELUXE
BUSINESS CENTER
Select a Topic and View Its Contents
BUSINESS WORKBOOKS
REFERENCE TOOLS
ONSCREEN MANUALS
INTUIT SHOWCASE
Starting Your Business
Your Financial Statements
Borrowing Money for Your Business
Managing Accounts Receivable and Collections
Managing Your Inventory
Should You Lease or Buy?
Depreciating Your Assets
EXIT
QUICKBOOKS

***QuickBooks* is Intuit's financial solution for small businesses. It lets you keep track of accounts, process invoices, write checks, and run reports.**

you want to embed an *Excel* chart in a *Word* report, simply select the chart with the mouse and drag it into your *Word* document. If you alter the chart numbers in *Excel* later, the changes will show up automatically in your *Word* report.

At a price of $500 or more for either the Windows 3.1 or Windows 95 version, *Office* may seem expensive, but it's far cheaper than ponying up $300 or more for each of the four main apps and $99.95 for *Schedule+*. As with *Works 95*, *Office 95* provides Wizards and many other document creation shortcuts, giving you even more compelling reasons to invest in a suite.

Follow the Money

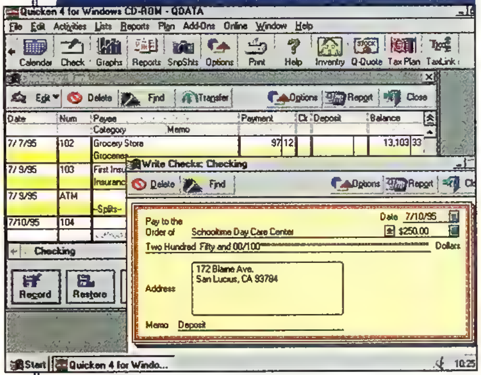


Running a home office means wearing many hats, from receptionist to chief financial officer. And even if you have a head for figures, a spreadsheet alone can't do all of the accounting chores required of a small business. Personal finance and small-business accounting software make a much better fit.

If you're a one-person operation, a personal finance package may be all you need. Personal finance managers help you keep track of your checkbook, pay bills (either by printing checks or by using an electronic bill-paying service like CheckFree), and manage ongoing financial outlays such as loans and investments.

For our money, there's no better financial partner than Intuit's $60 *Quicken Deluxe* for Windows (though MECA's $50 *Managing Your Money Plus*, which features advice from well-known author Andrew Tobias, is a close second). The CD-ROM-based *Quicken Deluxe* takes the original program's formidable management tools and adds creative multimedia content—such as interactive video consultations with financial gurus Jane Bryant Quinn and Marshall Loeb—customized to virtually any situation.

Quicken


Quicken 4 for Windows CD-ROM - QDATA
File Edit Activities Lists Reports Plan Add-Ons Online Window Help
Calendar Check Graphs Reports SnpShts Options Print Help Inventory Q-Quote Tax Plan TaxLink
Delete Find Transfer Options Report Close
Record Restore
Checking
Start Quicken 4 for Windo...
10:25

Write Checks: Checking

Date 7/10/95

Pay to the Order of Schooltime Day Care Center $250.00

Two Hundred Fifty and 00/100 Dollars

Address 172 Blane Ave.
San Lucus, CA 93784

Memo Deposit

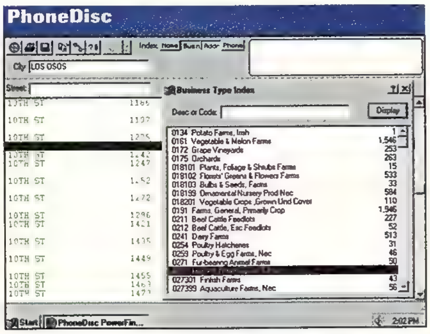
***Quicken*'s CD-ROM edition offers a quick link to *TurboTax*, lots of additional financial advice, and access to online information.**

Got a 401K plan? If not, you might also want to consider *Quicken Financial Planner*, a $39.95 program that also calls upon Jane Bryant Quinn to help you analyze and improve upon your current retirement investment plans.

If you have employees, inventory, and the need for a bulletproof audit trail, you'll want something more powerful. Small-business accounting software like Intuit's *QuickBooks* and *Peachtree Accounting for Windows* will help you handle accounts receivable and payable, inventory, payroll, and reporting. Though far less powerful and customizable than their big-business cousins, they're also far cheaper—usually less than $200 on the street.

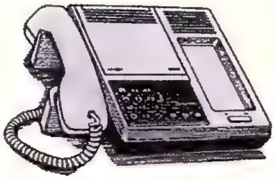
Peachtree's $169 CD consists of the company's core accounting product and a lot of extra applications, most of them unrelated to accounting. *QuickBooks 3.0* for Windows' $129 CD-ROM augments its business tools with a 400MB ZIP code directory, as well as some audio help files. Both are good deals.

PhoneDisc


City LOS OSOS
Street
Business Type Index
Display
Start PhoneDisc PowerFin...
2:02 PM

Digital Directory Assistance's massive 5-CD *PhoneDisc* lets you cruise through listings by address instead of name, and request a list of businesses in a particular locale.

Making Connections



Aside from your computer, your most important piece of office equipment is the humble telephone. Luckily, there are plenty of CD-based tools that help you tame this unruly beast, from personal information managers (PIMs) to digital phone books.

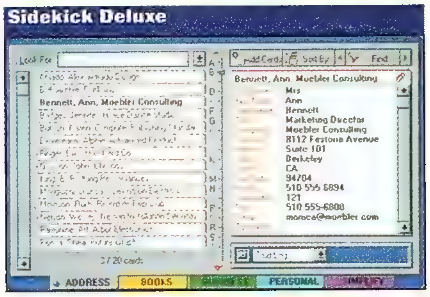
In fact, one of the first PIMs ever made is now available on CD. Like its floppy disk-based ancestor, Starfish Software's *Sidekick Deluxe* lets you store names, addresses, phone numbers, and other miscellaneous information in a pre-defined database. You can also keep a personal calendar, set alarms, make to-do lists, and take virtually unlimited notes.

The *Deluxe* version adds several Sidekick Companion files—excerpts from *Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide*, travel tips, recipes, and more—which you can access from the program's main menu. For multimedia content, Borland/Starfish founder Philippe Kahn stars in an interactive video titled "Organized for Success." *Dashboard 3.0*, a popular Windows navigation and diagnostic tool, is also included in the disc's $69.95 retail price.

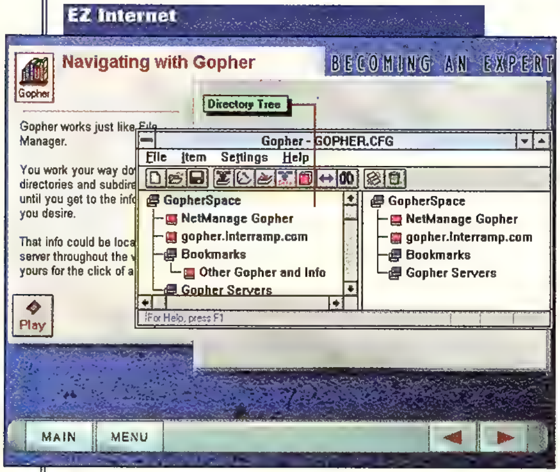
Another essential CD-ROM tool is a digital phone book that contains all business and/or residential listings in the United States. These discs let your PC do the walking—sorting by city, ZIP code, phone exchange, and other criteria to find the individual or group you need. Several phone CDs are available, but the two best are Pro CD's *SelectPhone* and Digital Directory Assistance's *PhoneDisc PowerFinder*.

The 1996 version of *SelectPhone* features more than 95 million phone listings, including all published business and residential listings in the United States, and costs less than $100. You can also get more specialized discs, such as AT&T's Toll-Free Directory and the Pro CD Fax Book.

Sidekick Deluxe


Look For
Add Card
Sort By
Find
ADDRESS
BOOKS
PERSONAL

Besides storing phone numbers, addresses, and appointments, *Sidekick Deluxe* CD offers video tutorials on how to organize your life.


EZ Internet

Navigating with Gopher

Gopher works just like File Manager.

You work your way do directories and subdire until you get to the info you desire.

That info could be loca server throughout the w yours for the click of a

Think a gopher is only one of those little critters that lives underground? IMSI's new *EZ Internet* helps you make sense of cyberspeak.

DDA's Windows 95-compatible *PhoneDisc* comes in a business edition for $79, a residential edition for $49, or a $99 Combo Pack. All versions take advantage of Windows 95 features such as drag and drop, long file names, and Explorer-style dialog boxes. DDA also sells a "lite" business phone directory and a CD-ROM containing fax numbers.

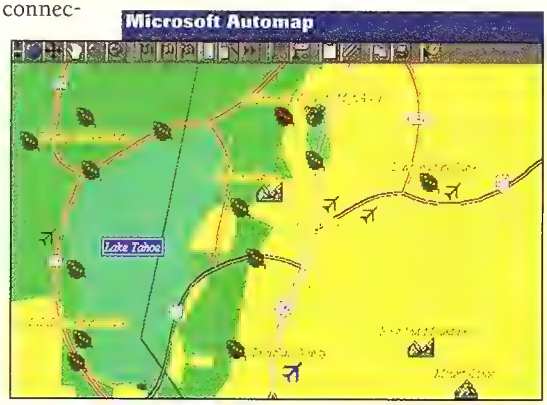
No modern home office would be complete without some kind of online connection. If you want to know more about how to get wired, several CD-ROMs can help. One of the best tutorials for Net newbies is MindQ's $59.95 *Internet Knowledge Odyssey* (see "Surf's Up: Internet Tools on CD," October 1995). It provides ten multimedia tours of the Internet and a site simulator that lets you practice your cyberspace techniques before you ever go online. IMSI's $40 *EZ Internet* also includes educational tutorials, as well as special features like online "yellow pages" for the Internet.

Help Where You Need It

No two home offices are exactly alike, and neither are their software libraries. The following are a handful of specialized titles that will prove vital to some home businesses.

If you plan to take your one-man (or -woman) show on the road, you'll need help figuring out where to go. A satchel of CDs help you plan long-distance trips, determine the best routes, and find the right hotels and restaurants along the way, whether you're traveling for business or pleasure (see "Planning the Perfect Vacation," August 1995).

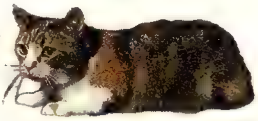
Microsoft's *Automap Road Atlas* is one of the most recognized and respected names in the bunch. This $39.95 disc contains maps and travel guides, and uses Microsoft Wizards to help you plan your trip. Frequent fliers may also want to check out Rand McNally's $49.95 *StreetFinder 1996*, which helps you find addresses on more than 6 million miles of U.S. streets.


Microsoft Automap

Need to take your office on the road? *Microsoft Automap* will tell where to go and how to get there.

Unclear about the direction of your fledgling company? Then $29.95 is a small price to pay for some sound advice. *How To Really Start Your Own Business*, published by Zelos Digital Learning in conjunction with *Inc.* magazine, uses audio clips encased within a multimedia presentation to impart the wisdom of such successful entrepreneurs as the founders of Pizza Hut and David's Cookies.

Home Cheap Home



Do these CDs still bust your home-office budget? In that case, your best solution may be shareware. The same distribution policy employed by the mega-hit game *Doom* (no cost for a copy of the program, but a registration fee is asked if you keep using it) is used by thousands of small software developers. Many excellent small-business shareware applications—such as *WordExpress* and *Time & Chaos*, a popular word processor and a PIM, respectively—boast impressive feature sets and low-cost registration fees.

You can find these programs online, and you can also get massive collections of them on CD-ROM for a small fee. The Association of Shareware Professionals (ASP) publishes a quarterly disk for $20. Public Software Library makes monthly discs available for $24 to $34 each, and Walnut Creek publishes several collections, including the $39.95 *Business Software Library* (a combination book and disc).

The information economy has come home in a big way. These CDs will make it easier to move your computer from the corporate boardroom to your spare bedroom.

Freelance writer Kathy Yakal works out of her home office in Los Osos, California. Chris Charla is an associate editor for Next Generation, *a* CD-ROM Today *sister publication.*

PRODUCT INFO

ASP CD
Association of Shareware Professionals
(616) 788-5131

BUSINESS SOFTWARE LIBRARY
Walnut Creek CD-ROM
(800) 786-9907
(510) 674-0783

EZ INTERNET
IMSI
(800) 833-8082
(415) 257-3000

HOW TO REALLY START YOUR OWN BUSINESS
Zelos Digital Learning
(800) 345-6777
(415) 788-0566

INTERNET KNOWLEDGE ODYSSEY
MindQ Publishing
(800) 646-3008
(703) 938-3579

INTERNET MEMBERSHIP KIT
Ventana
(800) 743-5369
(919) 544-9404

MANAGING YOUR MONEY PLUS
MECA
(800) 288-6322
(203) 255-1441

MICROSOFT WORKS, MICROSOFT OFFICE, MICROSOFT AUTOMAP ROAD ATLAS
Microsoft
(800) 426-9400
(206) 882-8080

PEACHTREE ACCOUNTING FOR WINDOWS
Peachtree
(800) 247-3224
(770) 564-5700

PHONEDISC POWERFINDER
Digital Directory Assistance
(800) 284-8353
(617) 639-2900

PSL MONTHLY SHAREWARE CD-ROM
Public Software Library
(800) 242-4775
(713) 524-6394

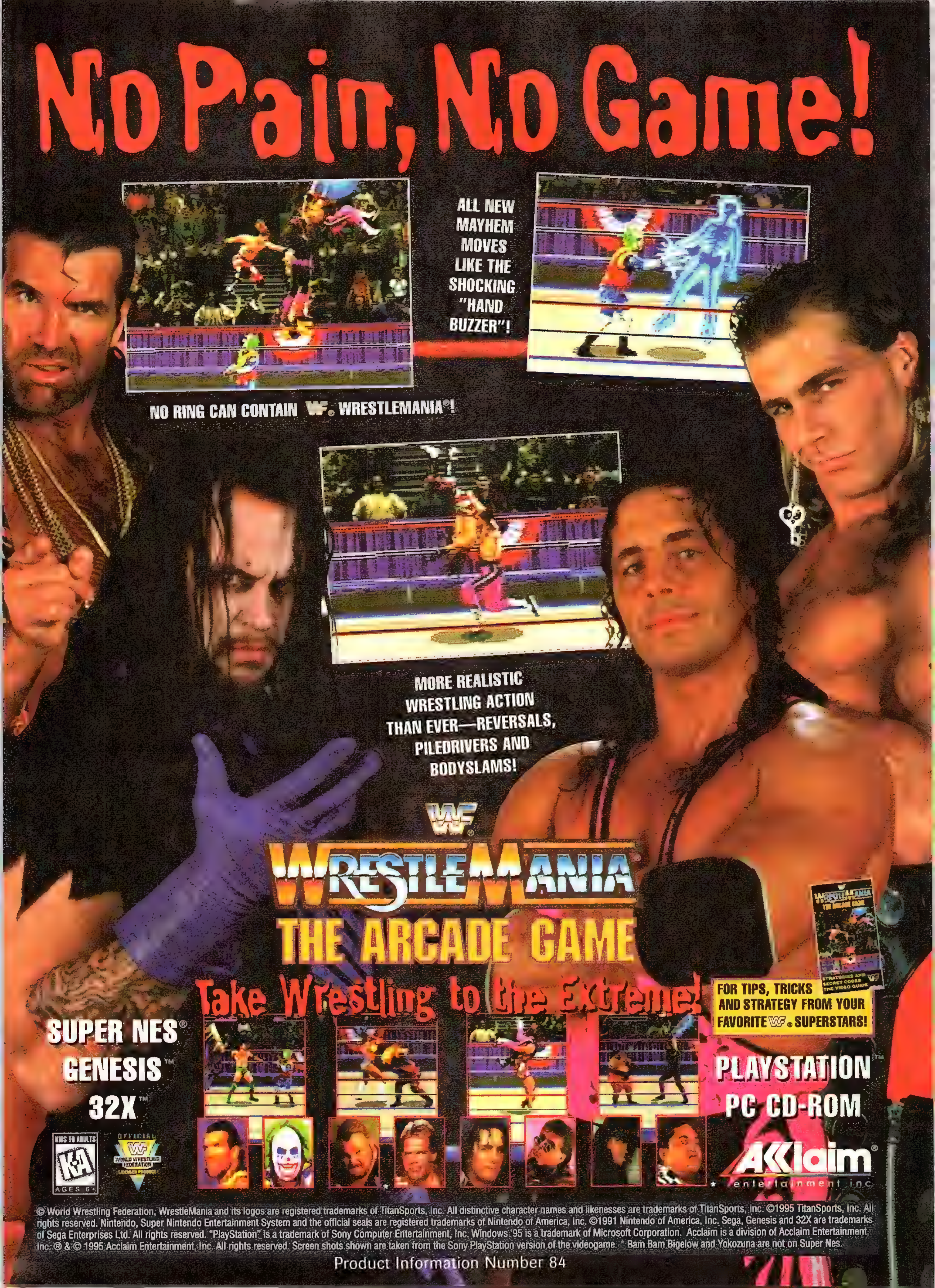
QUICKEN DELUXE, QUICKEN FINANCIAL PLANNER, QUICKBOOKS
Intuit
(800) 624-8742
(520) 295-3000

SELECTPHONE
Pro CD
(800) 992-3766
(508) 750-0000

STREET ATLAS USA VERSION 3.0
DeLorme
(800) 452-5931 ext.102
(207) 865-1234

STREETFINDER 1996
Rand McNally New Media
(800) 671-5006
(716) 871-7704

SIDEKICK DELUXE
Starfish Software
(800) 765-7839
(408) 461-5800



No Pain, No Game!

ALL NEW MAYHEM MOVES LIKE THE SHOCKING "HAND BUZZER"!

NO RING CAN CONTAIN WF® WRESTLEMANIA®!

MORE REALISTIC WRESTLING ACTION THAN EVER—REVERSALS, PILEDRIVERS AND BODYSLAMS!

WF® WRESTLEMANIA® THE ARCADE GAME

Take Wrestling to the Extreme!

FOR TIPS, TRICKS AND STRATEGY FROM YOUR FAVORITE WF® SUPERSTARS!

SUPER NES®
GENESIS™
32X™

PLAYSTATION™
PC CD-ROM

Acclaim® entertainment inc

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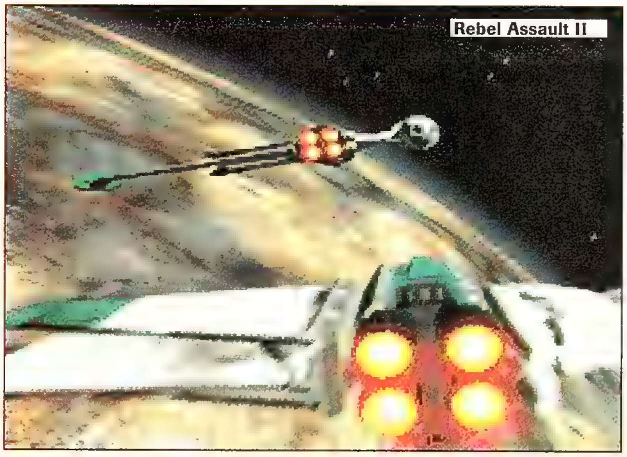
Product Information Number 84

WINDOWS 95 LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Jeffrey Adam Young

Forget performance, productivity, or plug and play. The real reason to upgrade to Windows 95 is the great games that it will inspire. Here's a look at 16 of the hottest new CD-ROMs for Win 95.



Rebel Assault II

It's been nearly three months since that earth-shattering event took place up near Seattle, and life has almost returned to normal. The smoke has lifted, the rubble has been cleared, and the TV camera crews have packed up and gone home.

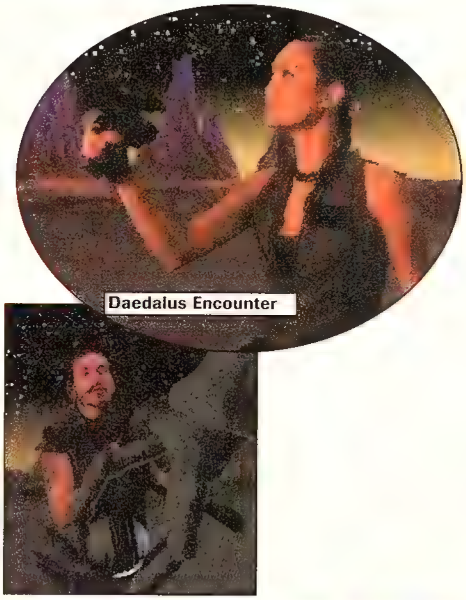
No, I'm not talking about another eruption of Mount St. Helens—I'm talking about last August's launch of Windows 95. Microsoft pulled out all the stops in promoting what many predict will be the most successful piece of software ever written. And yet, despite the best efforts of Jay Leno, the Rolling Stones, and a $200 million marketing campaign, there are some people on this planet who still haven't made the upgrade.

If you're one of the holdouts, be aware that Bill Gates and company have conjured up perhaps the most compelling reason yet to make the move: Windows 95 games.

A new breed of "native" Windows 95 CD-ROMs are about to appear. These titles will feature more realistic sound, game-console quality animation, bigger and faster video, and easier network and modem connectivity for multiplayer games. In other words, a whole lot more bang for a little more buck.

Of course, not all Win 95 games will be created equal. Most of the first games to appear will be versions of existing DOS and Windows 3.1 CD-ROMs that have been updated to run under the new operating system. These titles will offer 32-bit data access for faster performance and auto-play capability, but little else about them is new.

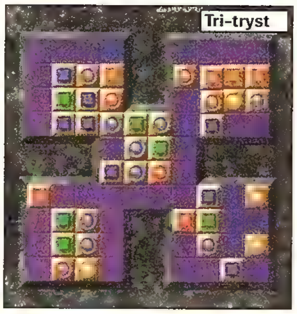
Other titles will take advantage of Windows 95's new application programming interfaces (APIs), such as DirectDraw, which improves animation speed by providing direct-to-screen access for graphics, or Reality Labs' Direct 3D



Daedalus Encounter

Battle Beast

Fury^3



Tri-tryst

API, which enables gamers to plug into new 3D graphic accelerator boards. These APIs will be distributed along with the games and hardware products; adding them to your system should be as easy as installing, say, QuickTime for Windows.

Are these games really as good as they sound? To find out, I looked at the current crop of Windows 95 discs, as well as some hot titles that should be available by the time you read this. I also checked out how well Win 95 works with today's leading DOS titles (see the sidebar, "DOS Games Meet Windows 95"). My conclusion: There's more to this new wave of games than just marketing hype.

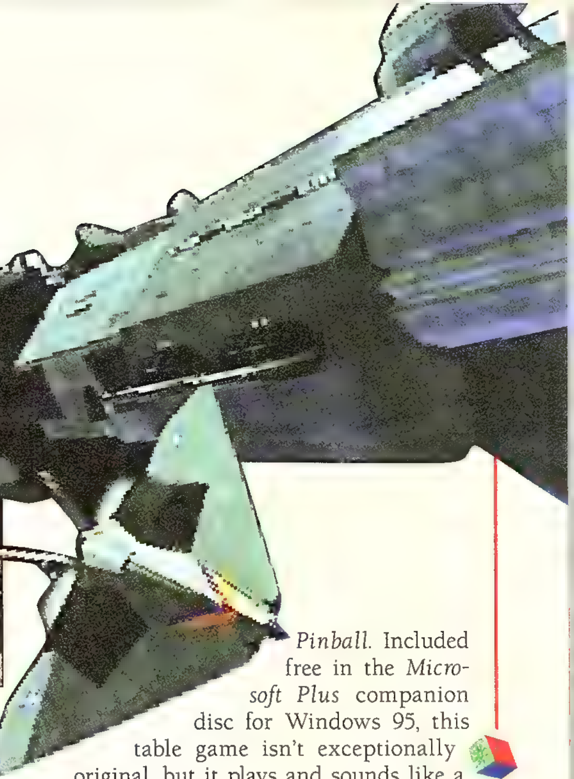
Games You Can Play Today

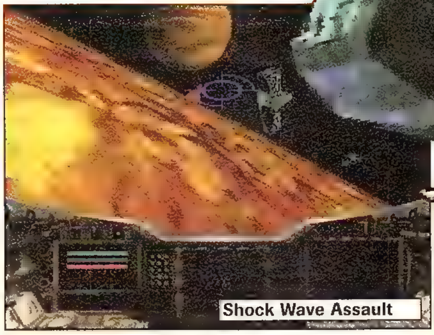
The first thing you notice about native Windows 95 CDs is that they require no lengthy installation process. Gone are the days of the technical pop quiz that drilled you with baffling questions about your PC's IRQ and DMA interrupts. Also gone are the frustrating incompatibilities with your computer's internal organs. Simply turn on your PC and insert the disc: The game automatically installs itself onto your hard disk and starts running.

This was certainly true for the first pair of Windows 95 titles we put to task, Activision's *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure* (see the review on page 114) and 7th Level's *Battle Beast*. Both games loaded and ran without a hitch, bringing true arcade-style gaming experiences to the desktop.

Pitfall is a side-scrolling adventure game where you must hack your way through the Amazon jungle, avoiding alligators and other nasty beasts. An earlier version of *Pitfall* appeared on the Atari game system some 13 years ago, and others have shown up on various game consoles since then, but the game has never looked or sounded as good as it does now under Win 95. Aside from smoother animation and richer CD-quality Red Book audio, the newest Pitfall offers more levels of complexity than its earlier incarnations.

Like many Win 95 games, *Pitfall* offers the option of switching between windowed and full-screen versions of the game. This allowed me to stretch Pitfall Harry, Jr., the game's protagonist, to appear ludicrously tall and skinny or short and wide. Running in a smaller window enables gamers to switch to other programs for convenience. This is a big help for strategy games where there's a large span of time between interactions, but for an action game like *Pitfall*, it's best to keep your head in the game with the full-screen mode.

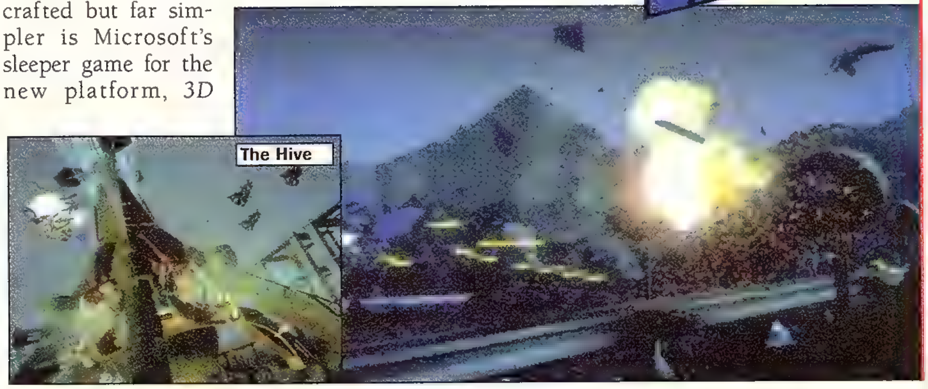



Shock Wave Assault

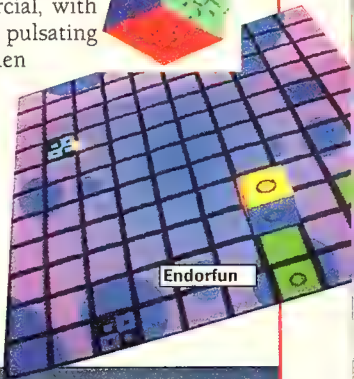
Meanwhile, *Battle Beast* takes another classic arcade genre—the one-on-one fighting game—and turns it into a wacky cartoon slugfest. In this game, originally developed for Windows 3.1 and then modified for use with Win 95, harmless vermin metamorphose into fighting machines, which then pound at each other over a series of colorful backdrops. What's most amazing about *Battle Beast* is the quality of the graphics (better than any Saturday morning cartoon) and the speed of the action. Because it also runs in 16-bit mode under Windows 3.1, *Beast* technically isn't a native Win 95 game; but 7th Level's Top Gun development tools work as well if not better than Microsoft's DirectDraw API to provide fast animation that's as smooth as melted butter.

Microsoft's first foray into serious gamer territory is *Fury*³, an action-based fighter ship simulation with freedom to fly in any direction—sort of like *Doom* with wings (see the review in the October 1995 issue, page 92). The game is nearly identical to Apogee's *Terminal Velocity* (they were created by the same developer), but it runs considerably slower than its DOS-based twin. Still, the installation process is much easier, making it a good choice for the technically challenged gamer.

More skillfully crafted but far simpler is Microsoft's sleeper game for the new platform, *3D Pinball*. Included free in the *Microsoft Plus* companion disc for Windows 95, this table game isn't exceptionally original, but it plays and sounds like a real pinball machine. Like previous Windows 3.1 games, *3D Pinball* requires little commitment and offers hours of simple pleasure—making it the prime candidate to replace Windows *Solitaire* as the leading office pastime.


The Hive

If arcade games aren't exactly your style, don't fret—plenty of Win 95 games will be designed for (slightly) more mature audiences. One of the most original is Time Warner Interactive's *Endorfun* (see the review on page 112), which is available for both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. *Endorfun* is a simple puzzle game that looks like an interactive Frutopia commercial, with trancelike music, pulsating colors, and hidden self-affirming messages. However, other than using autoplay for easy installation, *Endorfun* doesn't take advantage of any Windows 95 features.


Endorfun

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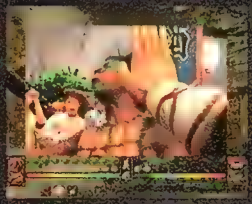

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Product Information Number 113

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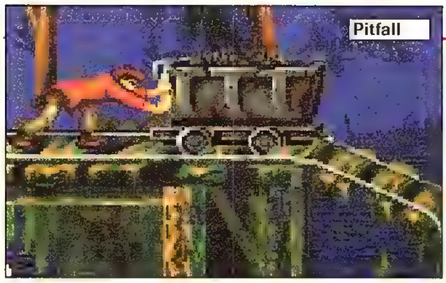


Coming to a Screen Near You

Despite the endless months of beta testing and delays, Microsoft released its Win 95 games developer kit a scant few months before the launch of Win 95. As a result, some of the hottest new games were still incomplete at press time. Here's a quick look at games that are coming, many of which will be on the retail shelves this fall.

Trimark Interactive's *The Hive* is a beautiful example of the benefits Windows 95 brings to displaying rendered 3D graphics. This frenetic shoot-'em-up lets you fly through a series of computer-generated 3D spaces, as you attempt to save the galaxy from giant killer bees called Hivasects. You can also branch seamlessly to game segments at stationary gun turrets, which pan a full 360 degrees with remarkable fluidity. Trimark's next release, a first-person spaceship hockey game called *MagZone*, pushes the envelope even further, with breathtaking 3D graphics and competition from multiple human opponents via modem and LANs. *MagZone* is set for release in 1996.

This fall, Electronic Arts will unveil a Win 95 version of its popular 3DO game *Shock Wave Assault*. This first-person air combat game will compete directly with Microsoft's *Fury*³, building on the genre with filmlike cut scenes interspersed between action-packed levels.

Building on the immense popularity of its *Star Wars* inspired *Rebel Assault*, Lucas Arts will unveil a native Win 95 sequel, *Rebel Assault II*. Featuring more visual pyrotechnics than its predecessor, *Assault II* will stream incredibly sharp video playback while seamlessly integrating action sequences. Expertly edited video vignettes will echo George Lucas's movie-making style.

Mindscape is planning to roll out no less than 13 Win 95 native titles, including *Cyberspeed*, a driving and shooting strategy game that takes advantage of 3D graphics accelerator boards, and *Al Unser Jr. Arcade Racing*, a first-person racing game in the tradition of *Pole Position*. *Arcade Racing* uses the DirectPlay API for easier multiplayer games over a network.

The 11th Hour, Trilobyte's long-awaited sequel to *The 7th Guest*, will be fully compatible with Windows 95 (that's good news for anyone who tried to install the first game under Windows 3.1). Other native games, from publisher Virgin Interactive, include an enhanced version of this year's cinematic adventure *The Daedalus Encounter* and a puzzle game called *Tri-tryst*.

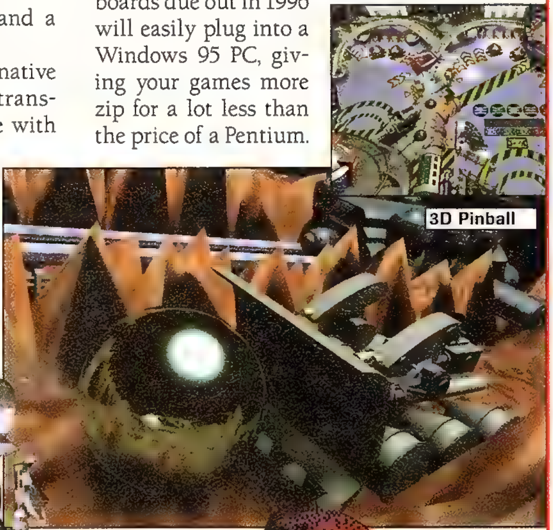
Meanwhile, Sierra On-Line's first native game, *Thexder*, features a robotic transformer in a side-scrolling action game with 50 different worlds. Taking advantage of the DirectSound, DirectPlay, and DirectInput APIs, *Thexder* will offer great sound and easy multiplayer capability over networks or modem connections.

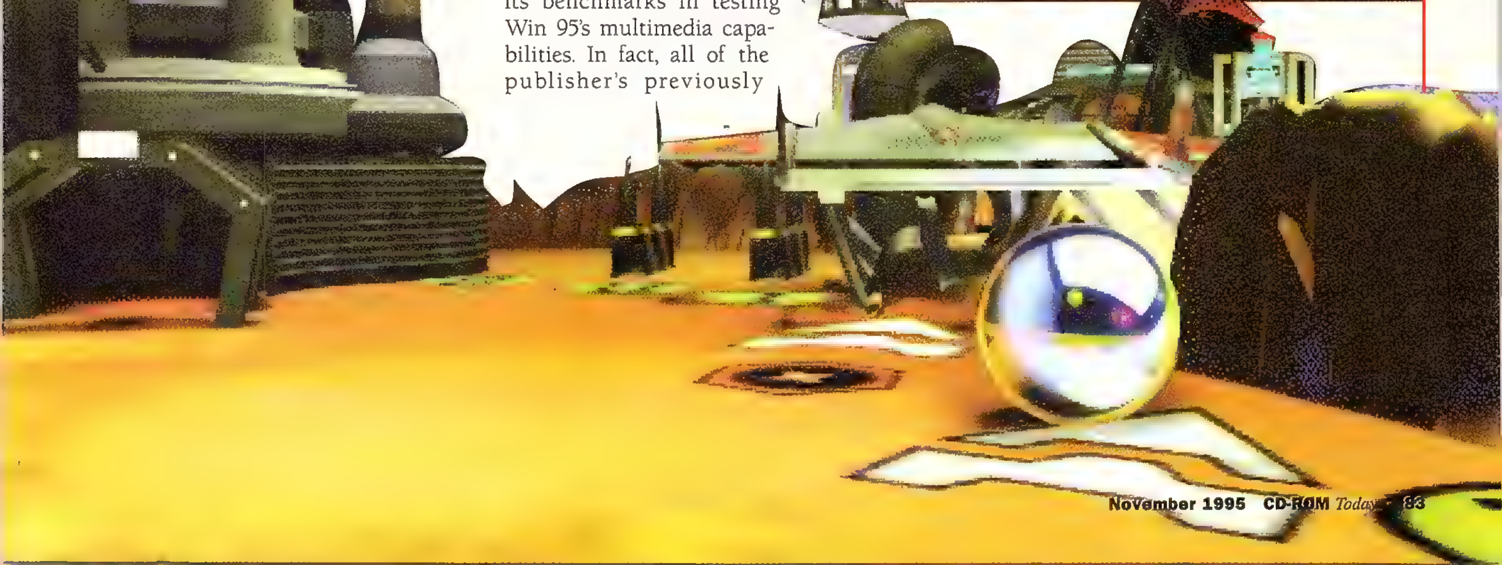
Finally, if you're hungry for a little education along with your fun and games, keep an eye peeled for a batch of titles from Humongous Entertainment. Microsoft used Humongous's *Freddi Fish and the Case of the Missing Kelp Seeds* as one of its benchmarks in testing Win 95's multimedia capabilities. In fact, all of the publisher's previously released games have been optimized and rereleased to run under Windows 95, and a host of new titles (including a new Putt-Putt game) will be out by the holidays.

Plug and Pay

In the past, attempts to bring arcade-style action to PCs failed because desktop systems lacked the horsepower to accurately mimic the powerful arcade game processors. But thanks to Win 95's 32-bit data access and new APIs, your computer can handle complex tasks that used to bog down its nervous system. If the games I've seen are any indication, Windows 95 may offer some serious competition to TV-based gaming systems like Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis, and the 3DO machine.

Of course, to take full advantage of all this cool stuff you'll need the right hardware. Windows 95 itself will take as much processing oomph and memory as you're willing to throw at it. Despite Microsoft's claims, you'll need at least a 486 DX2/66 with 8MB of RAM; most game manufacturers aren't stepping over that line yet. For the upgrade fanatic, a new generation of graphics accelerator boards due out in 1996 will easily plug into a Windows 95 PC, giving your games more zip for a lot less than the price of a Pentium.

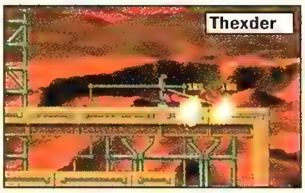


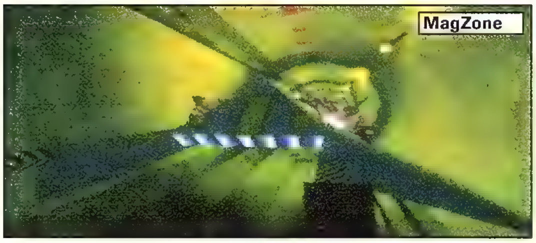


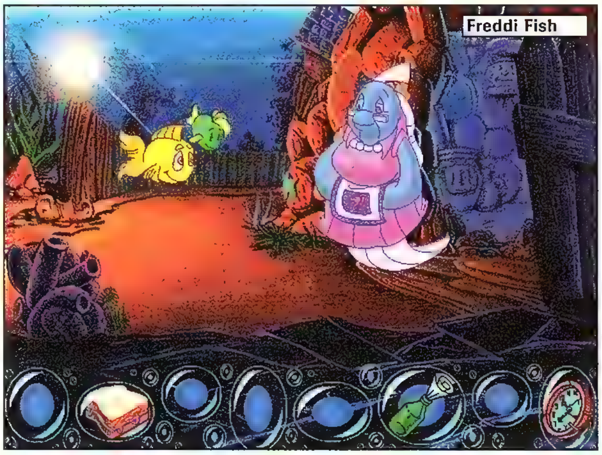
You may also want to upgrade your input device. To mimic their arcade game counterparts, the new action games in particular beg for precise, digital controllers that record distinct positions away from the center point (instead of an analog stick's incremental steps between the center and the outside). Naturally, Microsoft is selling a joystick of its own to fill the niche created by new Windows 95 games; other vendors such as Advanced Gravis offer gamepads to support one-on-one fighting games.

But the $64 Billion Question is, Do these new games warrant upgrading to Windows 95? As much as I hate to pad the pockets of an already absurdly rich Bill Gates, I have to answer yes. With unrivaled improvements over earlier operating systems, Windows 95 offers better, faster, easier, and more detailed games than previously thought possible on the PC.

Jeffrey Adam Young, a journalist covering multimedia for five years, lives in Venice, California.


Thexder


MagZone


Freddi Fish

DOS GAMES MEET WINDOWS 95

Star Trek

Despite what some games vendors might want you to believe, upgrading to Windows 95 doesn't necessarily mean you'll have to toss out your favorite DOS games. In fact, Microsoft claims that existing DOS games actually run better and perform faster under Windows 95.

But do they really? I decided to find out for myself. I took five of the most popular DOS CD-ROMs and ran them under the new operating system. The result: Some titles ran easily, while others required a bit of futzing before they worked right. And though none of the games seem to run any faster under Windows 95, they don't seem to lose any speed, either.

Old DOS, New Tricks

DOS games running under Win 95 fall into two categories: those that will run in a DOS window and those that will only run after you restart the computer in DOS mode.

Id Software's *Doom* will run in a DOS window in Windows 95, and so will most of its copycat games. That's hardly a surprise, considering that Microsoft used the legendary gorefest as one of its benchmark games for measuring compatibility and performance. (The game's developer, Id Software, plans to release Windows 95 native versions of *Doom* and *Doom II* by the end of the year.)

Doom II

Surprisingly, LucasArts's *Dark Forces* and *Full Throttle* both installed and ran flawlessly in a DOS window. Before I had installed Windows 95, my system required a boot disk to run these games. Score two points for Microsoft.

However, a number of my favorite games, including Apogee's *Terminal Velocity* and Spectrum Holobyte's *Star Trek The Next Generation: A Final Unity*, refused to run in a DOS window. The only way to make these temperamental games work is to manually restart the computer in DOS mode and install the game as if DOS were the prime operating system. Then, each time you want to play the game, you'll have to restart your system in DOS mode. That's a little bit better than running from a boot disk, but not much.

When I tried to install *Terminal Velocity* from a DOS window, Windows 95 recognized the problem and asked me if I wanted to create a shortcut for running it in DOS mode. Normally, you answer yes, and the operating system gives you an icon that you can click to restart your system and launch the game. However, in the case of *Terminal Velocity*, a fittingly named terminal error occurred, and my computer automatically restarted in Windows 95 mode.

No Free Launch

Overall, the good news is that none of my current DOS favorites were entirely crippled by the move to Windows 95. Some just required a bit more techno-finesse than others.

Luckily, Electronic Arts for one has stepped up to the challenge and created a Windows 95-based installation program for all its non-native games. Other game companies that are in the awkward adjustment period between games developed under DOS and new Windows 95 versions could take a hint from EA. *— J. A. Y.*

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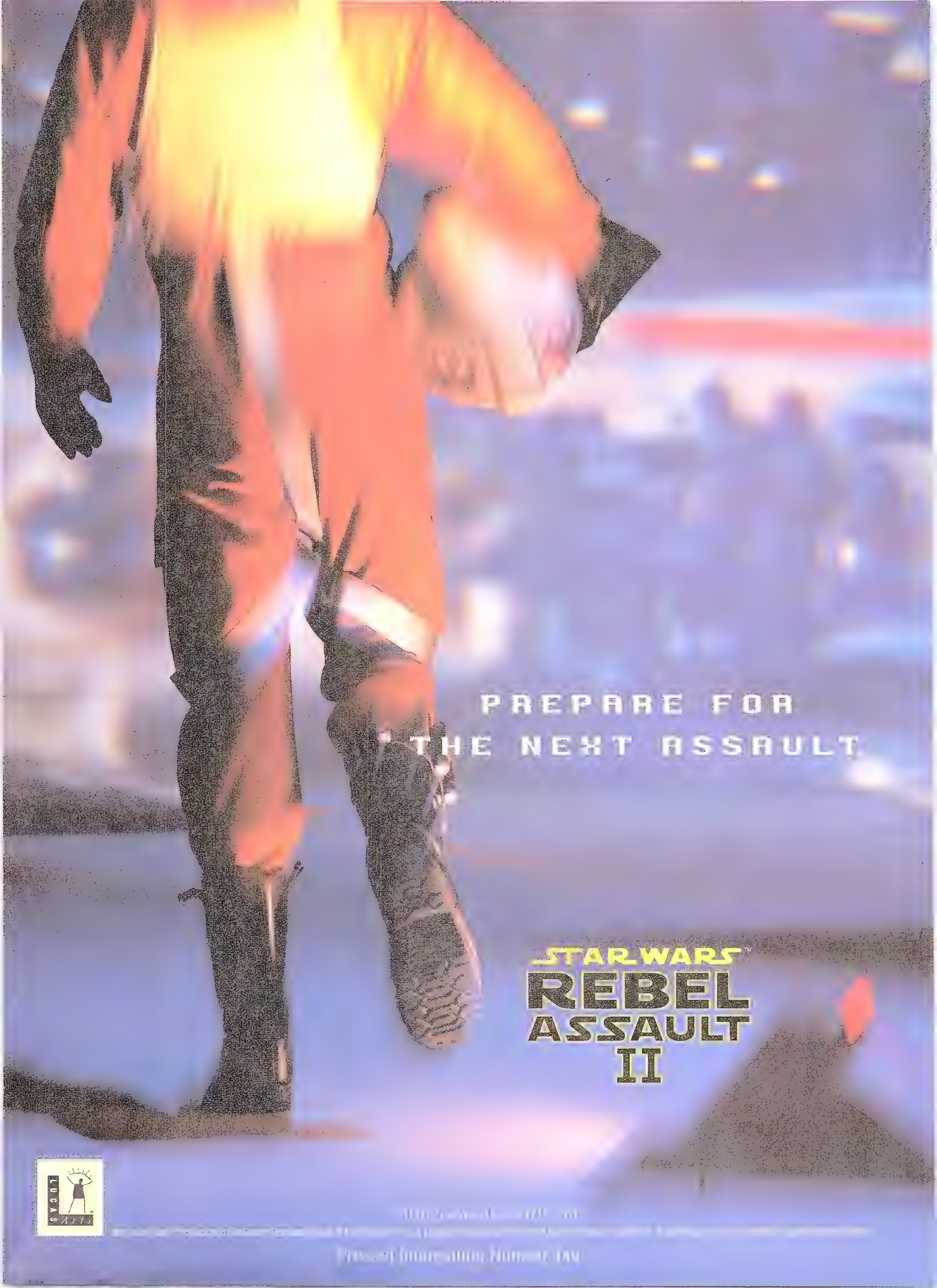
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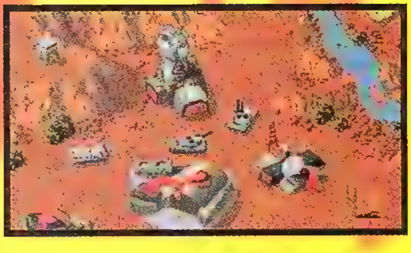

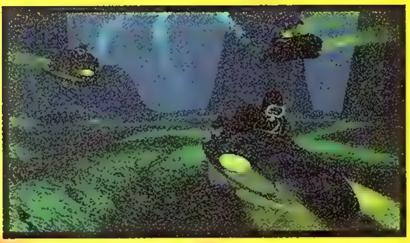

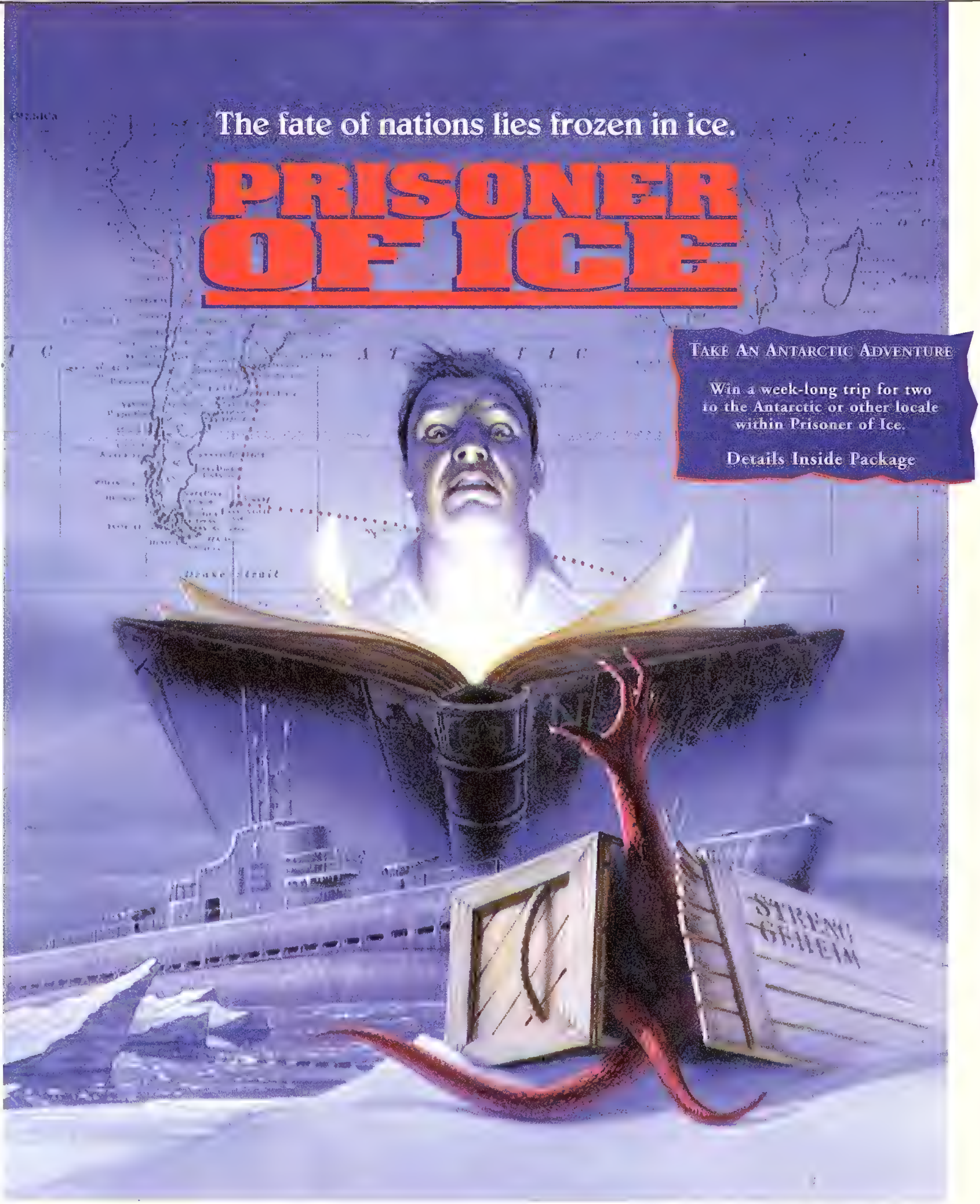
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Naomi Wise

Looking for the perfect holiday gift? How about a dog dish that speaks French or a pig-shaped ice cream scoop that goes "oink?" These products and more can be found on CD-ROM catalogs.

Twenty years ago, relatively few Americans would entrust their credit card numbers to direct-mail merchants. Couldn't they take your money and run off to Venezuela, or sell you crummy stuff for inflated prices? (Answers: Rarely. Sometimes.) Since then, many of us have turned into "cocooners," loathe to leave home even with our American Express cards.

As a result, we're in the middle of a home-shopping boom, fueled largely by glossy paper catalogs. And I should know—catalogs generate up to 26 pounds a week of paper-recycling in my household alone. ("Hi, my name's Naomi, and I'm a catalogholic.") But lately I've trying out a new way to shop, using catalogs on CD-ROM.

There are now about half a dozen disc-based catalogs. Some discs specialize in a particular item, such as music. Others are "general store" compendiums, with samplings from Spiegel, Land's End, Tower Records, and other household names, as well as a few catalogs so obscure that even I have never seen them. All can do things their paper cousins simply can't dream of—like letting you sample an album before you buy it, see videos of power tools in action, or search across a range of vendors for a product. Some even offer "expert" shopping advice for gift giving or hooks to online malls.

The downside? You won't find too many bargains. Search capabilities—and product selection—vary wildly, and you may gaze lengthily at that little hourglass as you wait for pages to load.

Still, digital shopping can save time and effort: When you shop til you drop, it'll be your mouse and not your feet that give way. Let's begin with the best of the batch, a superior specialty catalog that reveals just how brilliantly this medium can work. The carping will come later.

Contributing editor Naomi Wise prefers mail-shopping to mall-crawling.

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MUSICNET

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$29.95, four discs per year subscription
(800) 687-4263
(415) 904-6222
RATING ● ● ● ● ◐

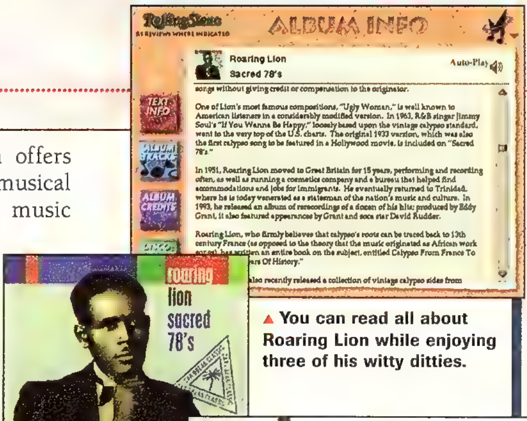
An awful lot of us have long since stopped listening to any new music, except by musicians we already know we like. We suspect there's something happening out there but we don't know what it is (do we, Mr. Jones?). For years I've longed for a chance to hear enough of new artists' albums to get a sense of their sound before deciding whether to buy. When I loaded *MusicNet*, this dream came true.

MusicNet is a quarterly CD-ROM that offers samples of about 200 albums, with three song excerpts (audio and/or video clips) for each. The music ranges from rock and blues to jazz and country, though some genres (like classical or New Orleans R&B) are a little sparse.

The disc loads with an ear-splitting music video collage of a dozen "featured selections." Click the Hotspot button to look at the featured albums, or Browse to see the full range of choices. You can filter rapidly by genre, search alphabetically, or simply scan all the music videos.

Select an album, and *MusicNet* shows you a larger version of the album cover, plus three song titles you can sample. The Information icon offers screenfuls of biographical and musical info, critical assessments from music magazines (including some vicious pans!), tracks, credits, and a discography. Click the audio button on the info screen and you can listen to the song excerpts in an endless loop while you read, offering ample opportunity to decide whether or not you really like Pearl Jam, Bettie Serveert (Dutch folk-rock), Laika and the Cosmonauts (a Finnish surfer-band), or the Mighty Sparrow (Trinidadian Calypso champ).

MusicNet's prices average around $14 per CD, or slightly below list. You can "mark" the albums you want, move your choices to an order form, delete some choices when you notice you're bankrupting yourself, and order automatically by modem, fax, or phone. Of course, you can also print out your shopping list and schlep down to the local Tower Records teenage listening jail. But when music shopping is this easy, why bother?



Roaring Lion
Sacred 78's

songs without giving credit or compensation to the originator.

One of Lion's most famous compositions, "Ugly Woman," is well known to American listeners in a considerably modified version. In 1963, R&B singer Jimmy Soul's "If You Wanna Be Happy," loosely based upon the vintage calypso standard, went to the very top of the U.S. charts. The original 1933 version, which was also the first calypso song to be featured in a Hollywood movie, is included on "Sacred 78's."

In 1951, Roaring Lion moved to Great Britain for 15 years, performing and recording often, as well as running a cosmetics company and a bureau that helped find accommodations and jobs for immigrants. He eventually returned to Trinidad, where he is today venerated as a statesman of the nation's music and culture. In 1993, he released an album of rerecordings of a dozen of his hits; produced by Eddy Grant, it also featured appearances by Grant and soca star David Rudder.

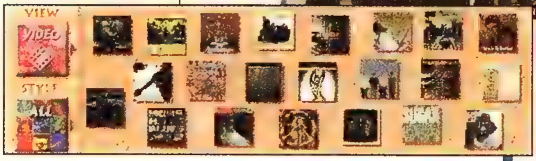
Roaring Lion, who firmly believes that calypso's roots can be traced back to 13th century France (as opposed to the theory that the music originated as African work songs), has written an entire book on the subject, entitled Calypso From France To
ars Of History."

also recently released a collection of vintage calypso sides from

▲ You can read all about Roaring Lion while enjoying three of his witty ditties.

Mississippi Masters
Early American Blues Classics 1927-35

▸ Calling up the index for the Blues selections locates a valuable compendium of rare old Delta blues.



▲ *MusicNet* offers a score of music videos.

2MARKET

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$3.95
2Market
(800) 622-6600
(415) 525-4700
RATING ● ● ● ◐

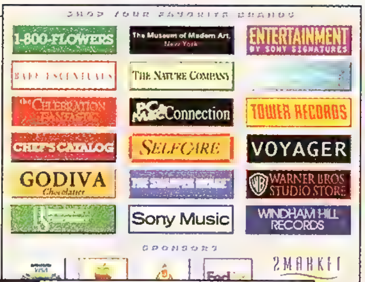
2Market is a joint venture between America Online and Apple Computer, and it shows. This fast and friendly catalog collection opens to a dreamy, cherub-laden "window." Almost immediately, a perky spokeswoman/gift-finder pops up on screen, telling you how to navigate (and hyping AOL in the process). A click gets rid of her, but she'll be back, baby—calling herself "Information" and once again singing the virtues of AOL.

2Market's shopping mall is a screenful of catalog logos; simply click the one where you want to start browsing. The offerings here are livelier than most, including music clips (Sony Music, Tower Records), Bugs and Daffy cartoon snippets (Warner Brothers), and printable recipes (Chef's Catalog).

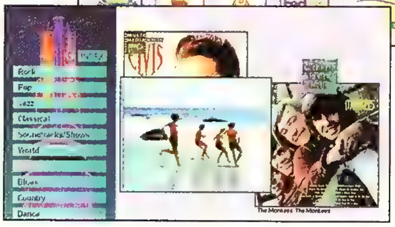
The products range from the mundane to the strange. Manhattan's Museum of Modern Art store offers up a $60 stapler and a red toy tractor for little urban Comrades to ride. Celebration Fantastic has pig- and cow-shaped ice cream scoops that make the appropriate noises, as well as Chocolate Body Paint (perfect for newlyweds) and a toilet-shaped piggybank ($27) that makes a flushing sound.

But Sharper Image takes the cake for pricey toys you didn't know you needed, like the Ultra Road Whiz. This gizmo lets you key in your location while driving, then locates the nearest motel, restaurant, or rest stop. A Radar Watchdog "sees through walls better than a live dog..." detecting motion up to 20 feet away, and woofs like a real German shepherd. "Put one in your child's bedroom, and you'll all sleep more peacefully," it says. (That is, until he gets up for his 3 a.m. road whiz and wakes the "dog.")

You can mark items as you go, adding them to your shopping list. The CD will automatically compile an order you can send via modem, or lets you print separate order forms for each merchant. And when you're shopping for that special someone, simply type in the occasion and/or the recipient's age and interests in *2Market*'s "gift finder" screen, and it will spotlight appropriate items from the catalogs.



▸ If the disc's catalogs aren't enough, you can access more by going on America Online.



▲ Tower Records includes many brief music videos, like this one from the Monkees.

2Market is also an online shopping service. AOL members can get updates to the CD and access customized advice from live gift-experts. However, to see what you're buying online you'll have to wait patiently for the photos to download. The CD is better: Browsing rivals paper for speed, and ordering is even faster.

SHOPPING 2000

WINDOWS
$4.95
(212) 447-9494
RATING ● ◐

Shopping 2000 starts with a mini-concert of "space music," but its charms couldn't soothe this savage beast. The disc's installation routine automatically landed the program on my Sacred Planet C: (world of basic operating software) instead of drive E: (decontamination satellite for new arrivals). Things went rapidly downhill from there.

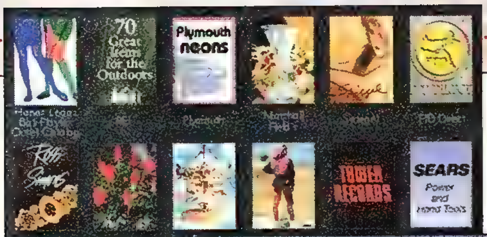
The disc's main interface features catalog covers from the Usual Suspects, plus a few oddballs. You can buy J.C. Penney's poly-blend bedsheets or Ross-Simons diamond bracelets. You can get running boards for your muscle car or hopelessly precious San Francisco Music Boxes. Hoping for high fashion, I began with Marshall Field, but soon fled from the prissy-voiced nonstop hype and pricey giftwares. Many clicks later I got back to the main menu and moved to a sporting goods catalog called California Best.

This catalog is "interactive": While gazing at running outfits, clicking View switches the photo to a side or back view, not a bad option if you like to look at jocks modeling tights. To bypass the snailpace navigation, I hit the Browse and Fast buttons. Images whipped by until I glimpsed—whoa!—a Body Fat Tester. This terrifying device allegedly lets you "measure, track, and control your body fat." What it does is measure your body fat percentage. But control? Does that mean I can send those excess lipids to my scalp and give myself a fat head?

A visit to Spiegel turned up multilingual pet bowls that presumably educate your beast while he gobbles (my cat already speaks Chinese, so I skipped them). While I was inspecting a $60 electric breadbox in the familiar Chef's Catalog, the disc crashed. I'd been 86'd, and I wasn't even shoplifting!

The closest I came to ordering was from the Hanes "Color Me Natural" catalog, featuring pantyhose for "women of color," in "flattering" (i.e., dark) shades and a fit that's roomier at hip and thigh, snugger on calf and ankle, than Hanes' hose for colorless women. Color me neutral: black hose are hardly race restricted.

An online version of *Shopping 2000* serves as Prodigy's mall, but the CD isn't modem-savvy. You'll need to print the order forms for each merchant, then call their 800 numbers, same as from a print catalog. Guess the program won't reach interplanetary speed 'til 2001.



▸ The program offers 40 "interactive" catalogs.

ART ROCK
1-800-262-7249
HAWAIIAN AOXOMOXOA

▸ Amid the array of gadgets, widgets, and geegaws, you can find a rare Grateful Dead poster.

dog bowl
$19⁹⁵
$15⁹⁵
$17⁹⁵
$12⁹⁵
WINSTON

▲ Spiegel's talking dog dishes are sure to teach your Fideaux to parler en francais.

THE MERCHANT/THE TRAVELER

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$4.95
Magellan Interactive
(800) 663-3472
(403) 571-2820
RATING ● ●

This disc is really two products in one. "The Traveler" is a dandy little travel guide, but the shopping catalog ("The Merchant") is a slow boat to nowhere.

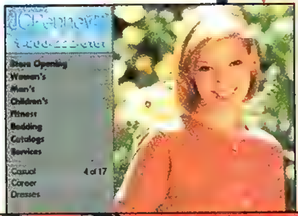
The disc opens with a sophisticated-looking virtual "den," from where you can choose travel or shopping info. The Traveller enchanted me with fabulous scenic photography, video clips, and excerpts from a travel CD. Antarctica, Africa, Australia, Indonesia, Tibet—The Traveller gives you the world. Don't leave home without it. (But it doesn't mention the typhoid, typhus, cholera, and hepatitis shots: Don't leave home without them.)

The Merchant, by comparison, is dullsville: the usual catalog excerpts, accompanied by cumbersome help, general gift-giving advice from Miss Manners, and navigation that's either painfully slow or blindingly fast, with no stops in between. Even the text search feature is addled. Looking for The Sharper Image's "Heart Sound Soother," I typed in the words "heart," "sound," and "soother," and Magellan still couldn't find it.

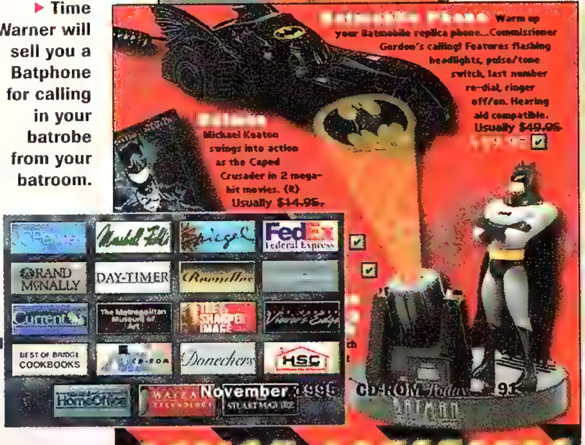
Nonetheless, I managed to locate all the Usual Suspects, as well as some unusual ones. I loved Viewer's Edge film cult items (a $20 Batmobile phone, High Noon salt and pepper shakers). I hated the Home Shopping Club chotchkas—especially a hinged, computer-shaped phone that looks like it was designed for space aliens.

Magellan also includes an interactive version of JC Penney. Just click on an item of clothing to change its color. Big fun, although I hated the pastels (I'm from San Francisco), and the dark colors obscured the finer details of each garment.

This brings up another downside to shopping by CD: You're always at the mercy of a blurry monitor. For example: Those of us who are past the age of perkiness (but can't breathe in a Wonderbra) are terrorized by sweaters with dropped shoulders, which make us look like poster girls for a Tragic Victims of Gravity telethon. With a paper catalog, you can just take off your bifocals, hold the photo an inch from your eyes, and hunt for the seam. No such chance on a monitor. Too bad none of these CDs has a "search" feature detailed enough to filter for "shoulderpads, any garment with..." For clothes calls, I'll stick with paper.



▸ JC Penney lets you change the color of the clothes you're inspecting.


Batmobile Phone Warm up your Batmobile replica phone...Commissioner Gordon's calling! Features flashing headlights, pulse/tone switch, last number re-dial, ringer off/on. Hearing aid compatible. Usually ~~$49.95~~ ☑

Batman Michael Keaton swings into action as the Caped Crusader in 2 mega-hit movies. (R) Usually ~~$14.95~~.

▸ Time Warner will sell you a Batphone for calling in your batrobe from your batroom.

COMPUSERVE CD

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$5.95, plus $9.95/month
for CIS membership
(800) 858-0411
(614) 457-8600

RATING

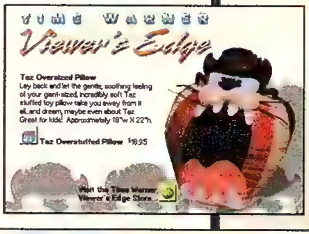
Last stop on my shopping spree was CompuServe's minimalist version of AOL's *2Market*. This flashy-looking disc says, "We've Got Big Fun," but "fun" proves to be a long installation followed by a tiny chance to shop. Where *2Market* is a rich, lively compendium that happens to include a lot of hype for AOL, this CD is CompuServe hype with a mere handful of catalogs, each offering a scant selection of items.

The CD's main purpose is to let you log on to CompuServe; once online, you can browse the 1,700-odd merchants that have shops on CompuServe's Electronic Mall. Much like AOL's online market, the Mall has text files with a few graphics you can download. The disc simply offers a few more images to complement the online product listings. For example, using the CD you can learn how to dress like a banker (with a suit from Brooks Brothers) or check out a Tasmanian Devil pillow (from Time Warner Viewer's Edge).

But the CD-ROM features products from only a handful of the major online tenants. For example, you won't find Adventures in Food, which specializes in "zodiac" gourmet baskets to tease the tastes of each sign. (As a Scorpio I am supposed to favor chilpotle salsa, red pepper linguine, and sage cheddar—hopefully not all at once.)

In any event, I still prefer the mail to this Mall: Like a kid dragged to visit a childless aunt, I wanted to ask, "Haven't you got any books with pictures in them?"

My final verdict? What I liked about all the CDs and online services was the chance to browse obscure catalogs—and get automatic price-tallies. Best of all, when I was done shopping I didn't have to lug 26 pounds of paper to the curb. I simply took some poultry shears, cut the shiny discs into star-shapes, and filed them with my mail-order Christmas ornaments.

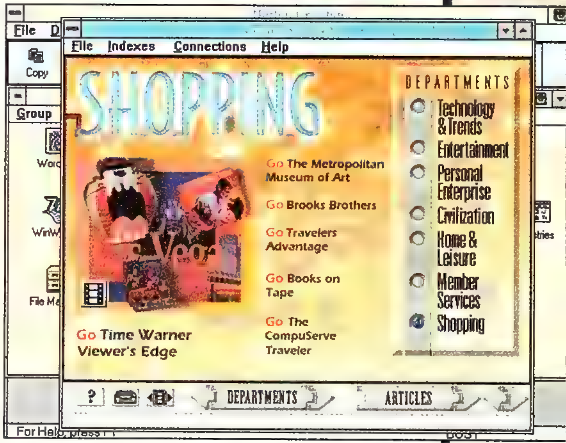


Taz Oversized Pillow
Lay back and let the gentle, soothing feeling of your giant-sized, incredibly soft Taz stuffed toy pillow take you away from it all, and dream, maybe even about Taz. Great for kids! Approximately 19"w X 22"h.

Taz Overstuffed Pillow $18.95

Visit the Time Warner Viewer's Edge Store

▸ **Time-Warner's "Taz" (here, a pillow) decides the CD is a yawner. Shopping online isn't much better, due to endless text screens and delays.**



▲ **CompuServe's CD-ROM offers only a handful of products, most of them silly.**

17" MONITOR FOR ONLY-$469

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Tympani—More Bang For Your Monitor Buck.

Even with a $469 price tag, the Tympani offers pincushioning control and Energy Star compliance, with DPMS power management.

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Moreover, color balancing allows adjustment of Red, Green and Blue, so you can match your screen color to your printer output, or maybe just your mood.

Specification Comparisons	Tympani	Tuba II	French Horn II
Dot Pitch (mm)	**0.42**	0.28	0.28
Maximum Resolution (Non-interlaced)	**1024x768**	1600x1280	1280x1024
Trapezoidal Control	**NO**	YES	YES
Tilt/Rotation Control	**NO**	YES	YES
Pincushion Control	**YES**	YES	YES
Color Balance Control	**NO**	YES	YES
Color Temp. Control	**NO**	YES	YES
Microprocessor Controls	**NO**	YES	YES
On-screen Controls	**NO**	YES	YES
Estimated Street Price	**$469**	$699	$499

Call us at (800) 237-9988 from 8:30am to 5:30pm PST and ask a product specialist about the full line of Orchestra 14", 15" and 17" displays as well as the Tempo Series of PCI and Vesa Local Bus video adapters.

For all your monitor needs, Orchestra has a model to fit your computing style.

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Technology In Concert
(800) 237-9988

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Product Information Number 164

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That's why you need TurboTax, America's #1-selling tax software! The easiest way to do your taxes. Now easier and better than ever! TurboTax features the exclusive Deduction Finder that combs your return looking for legal deductions you may have missed. And our Tax Advisor gives you help and advice, from start to finish, right when you need it.

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Get even more money-saving tax advice with TurboTax Deluxe on CD-ROM. TurboTax Deluxe includes the award-winning TurboTax 1040 program, plus a wealth of exciting multimedia tax advice. Use on-screen references—including the *How To Pay Zero Taxes* book and 30 IRS publications—to find tax savings opportunities. Watch video clips of easy-to-understand tax tips and explanations from financial experts Marshall Loeb and Mary Sprouse. And get straight answers to your toughest tax questions at the touch of a key.

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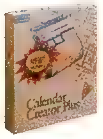
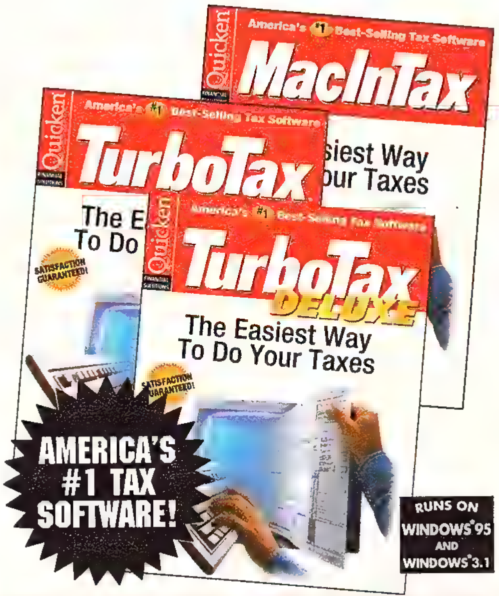
Calendar Creator Plus™ is the easiest way to create great-looking, customized calendars. Calendar Creator Plus supports a wide variety of paper sizes and calendar formats. With the new Version 2.0, you can place big pictures into calendar layouts … and choose from 7 professionally-designed style sheets!




Quicken
America's #1 Best-Selling Tax Software
MacInTax
TurboTax
The Easiest Way To Do Your Taxes
Satisfaction Guaranteed!
TurboTax
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PC WORLD
January 9, 1995

Money® Magazine
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PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE
February 21, 1995

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—*ComputerLife*

"★★★★★"
TurboTax on CD-ROM
—*PC Computing*

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Bill my: ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ Discover ☐ American Express
Shipping: $5 for the first item, $3.50 each additional item.
Card # ______________________ Exp. Date ____
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1-800-964-1040
EXT. 500116

TurboTax®

Minimum system requirements for Windows 1040 disk version: 4 MB RAM, 386sx or higher processor, Windows 3.1, Windows for Workgroups, or Windows95, VGA monitor. Windows Deluxe CD-ROM 1040 requires 4 MB RAM (8 MB RAM recommended), 486sx or higher processor, Windows 3.1, Windows for Workgroups, or Windows95, SVGA monitor with 256 colors, double-speed CD, SoundBlaster compatible sound card and speakers. TurboTax, MacInTax, and EasyStep are registered trademarks of Intuit. Other trademarks are the sole property of their respective owners. Please add all applicable state and local sales taxes, based on the destination of the order. (Shipping and handling not subject to tax in CA or NJ.) Intuit reserves the right to correct tax rates and/or collect the sales tax assessed by states as required by law. (Check or money order for full amount of order payable to Intuit.) NOTE: Customer is responsible for return shipping charges. Offer expires 4/15/96, not valid with any other offer.

Thinking I Could suRf on
Red cLouds all day, then
a worM hole riPPed and
twisted mY thouGhts
into toXic waste.

How I

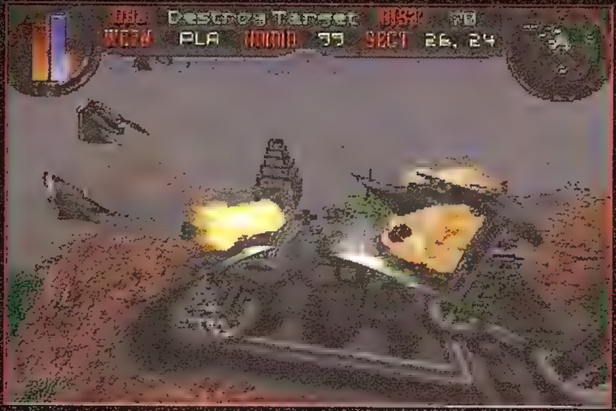
Dispersion caNNon missiles
came toWard Me
like a schOOl of AngelfiSh,
meTallic, all gleaMing.
Hey, tHey almOst
looked eDible.

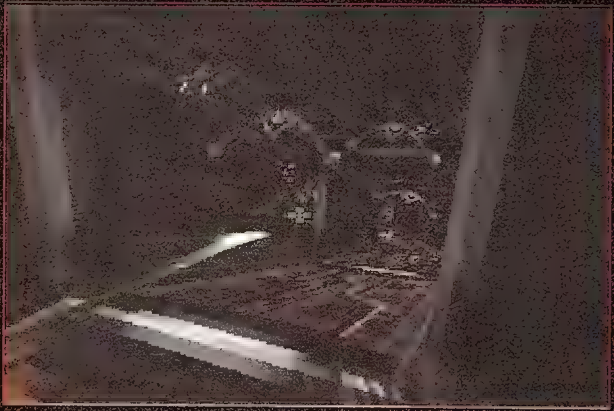
HallucinAtions begaN to happen aLL aroUnd me. Then I realiZed thOse Rockets weRe Real and they thouGht my flyiNg sucKed. Big tiMe.

diEd.

A thouSand plasMa rocKets taPPed on mY winDshield. I didn't hEar them knOcking so they taPPed harDer.

SpiNNing my heAd around
in a biLLion directiOns.
Bad moVe. As I wAs
seriOusly violated in a
cross fire from a cloud
that looked as innocent
as a kid holding candy.





Doing a liTTle tunnel spying,
picked the wRong tuNNel
obvIOusly as the DOM rocketS
heAding my wAy decided to do
some explOring theMselves.
I'll leaVe their intEnded
destiNation to your imagination.

DOing lOOp the lOOp
like a moNkey on a trEE,
then shraPnel, buildiNgs,
and funKy stuFF all hit
Me on my nOse like a
wEt thiCk moUnd of sPit.

You plummet from the sky. You hit your cockpit with bulging eyes.

This is no demo, it is you flying that warship. Eight planets await your twitching trigger finger, a spot on your satellite map and the brush of your metallic wings. Terran, L24-D, Ares, New Kroy, Sebek, Vestra, Tiamat, and the ultimate eye twitcher, Fury. Look around your cockpit using your virtual head and fly the impossible with six degrees of freedom. Your joy erupts into a wry smile. A servo laser is your best friend, a customized cockpit and an energy shield the only barrier between you and a sharp jolt back to reality. The reality being, Fury^3 is one of the first games optimized for Windows® 95. Kill stuff, fry stuff, fry, fry some more until it's as natural as breathing. Fight Fury^3 to the death on multiple missions. In the clouds, on the ground, and in netherworld tunnels.

Death comes like grains of salt out of a shaker in Fury^3. Enjoy them or at least die trying.

Microsoft Home
Microsoft
Fury3
Some people carry the world on their shoulders. You carry it in your sights.

Fly the "Trial version" of Microsoft Fury^3 at http://www.microsoft.com.

Thinking notHing blEEds on
this pyraMid-Infested
plAnet, then 30 or so bOmbs
explAined to me why.
There's no time to blEEd.

Microsoft

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?

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REVIEWS

●●●●● = outstanding; if all CD-ROMs were this good, we'd be out of a job

●●●● = excellent, though picky users may find some flaws

●●● = not perfect, but not bad either; usually worth the money

●● = a good idea done poorly (or maybe just a bad idea)

● = makes a great coaster

Star Trek Omnipedia

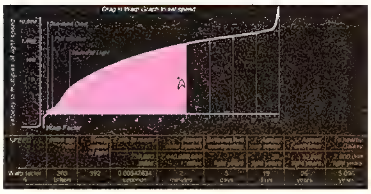
The ultimate reference guide to the Star Trek universe

MAC
(Windows version also available)
$79.95
Simon & Schuster Interactive
(800) 983-5333
(212) 698-2365

PROS
Comprehensive content, excellent user interface, great graphics, and superb sound effects

CONS
Moves at less than warp speed when switching between modes; a few video glitches

RATING ●●●●

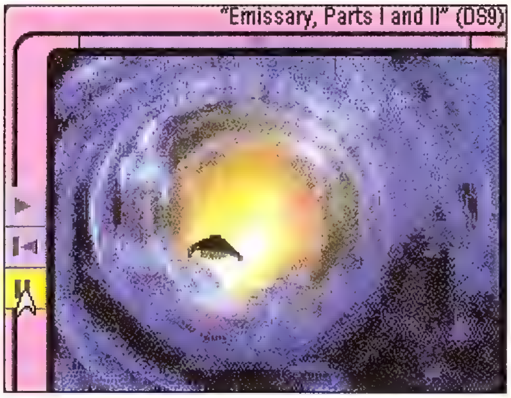


Resources mode provides all sorts of interesting information, such as the results of different warp speeds.

A&A Officer's Log, Stardate 49128.3—After only two days as the archaeology and anthropology officer aboard the Federation scout ship *U.S.S. Cochrane*, I have been summoned to a dig site near San Francisco on Earth that dates back to the late 20th century. I was brought in to help evaluate an amazing artifact that was recently uncovered there: a reflective plastic disc called a CD-ROM that was used to store digital information. Incredibly, this specimen is completely intact!

The disc is entitled *Star Trek Omnipedia*, and it's intended to be used with an old-style Macintosh computer. (Apparently, there was also a version for an obscure operating system called Windows, now long forgotten.) By chance, I recently acquired an antique Mac IIci with a CD-ROM drive in mint condition, so I was able to activate the artifact.

This CD-ROM includes virtually all information about the media phenomenon known as *Star Trek*, which included several television series and feature films. As an anthropology student at Starfleet Academy, I specialized in these ancient types of media and the effect of *Star Trek* on the culture of that period. I continue to be astonished that these 400-year-old shows predicted our present world with such uncanny accuracy.



Video clips from the series and films appear in a floating window that can be moved anywhere on the screen.

After installing the *Omnipedia* application on the Mac's "hard disk," I ran the software. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the screen layout resembles the displays used on most Federation ships, which made it easy to explore this antiquated archive. (Note: This information was published even earlier in an archaic, pulp-based form of storage called a "book," long since outmoded by online access.)

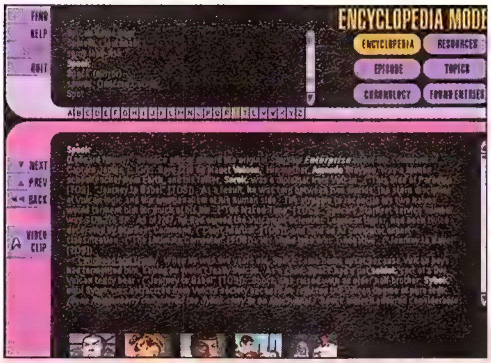
Amazingly, *Omnipedia* incorporates 20th century voice-recognition technology, enabling it to respond to certain voice commands. However, to access this capability you must have an AV or Power Macintosh (slightly later models than the IIci), or a "Windows" 486 or Pentium with a Sound Blaster 16 and Microsoft's Sound System software (all of which are extremely rare in the 24th century). Either way, the system recognizes only a handful of phrases, such as "Computer Encyclopedia Mode," "Computer Next Entry," "Computer Play Video," "Computer Page Text Forward," and so on. Instead of voice I accessed the data using a quaint device called a "mouse."

This drawing illustrates the concept of bearing (identifying the position of things with respect to the ship).

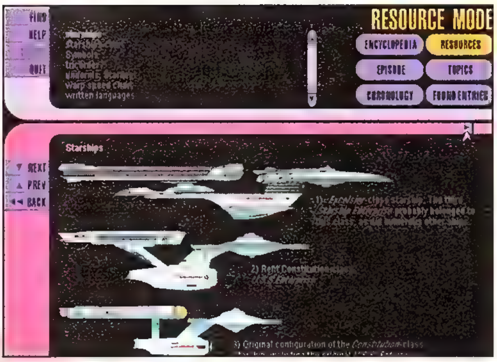
MARK 030
BEARING 087
BEARING 087 MARK 030
BEARING 329 MARK 322
BEARING 019 MARK 038
BEARING 258 MARK 010
BEARING 301 MARK 000
DIRECTION OF FLIGHT
BEARING 000 MARK 000

The *Omnipedia* offers three main modes of operation: Encyclopedia, Episode, and Chronology. Encyclopedia mode offers an alphabetical index of names, places, things, and events from the *Star Trek* universe. Clicking on any item calls up the *Omnipedia's* entry on the selected subject, including a reference to the old *Star Trek* movie or television series and episode from which it comes.

Bold words in each article are hyperlinks to related entries; simply click on a bold word to call up the next entry. Many articles include a tiny photo that you can enlarge by double-clicking on it, and 100 of the entries include a video clip. Unfortunately, a few of these clips are poorly chosen. For example, the video clip associated with 20th-century pacifist Edith Keeler is a close-up of Spock from "City on the Edge of Forever," the original-series episode that features Ms. Keeler. A clip of Keeler herself would have been much more appropriate. In addition, there are occasional glitches during video playback.

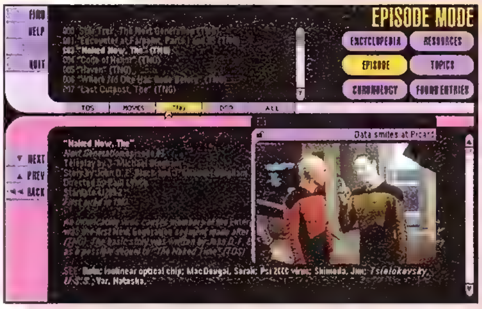

ENCYCLOPEDIA MODE
FIND
HELP
QUIT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
NEXT
PREV
BACK
VIDEO CLIP

▲ The entry on Spock in the Encyclopedia mode is quite lengthy. It also includes several photos and a video clip.

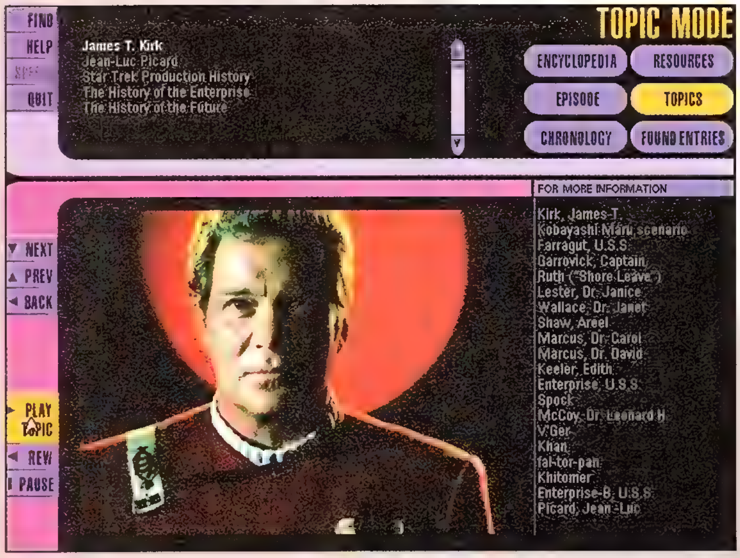

RESOURCE MODE
FIND
HELP
QUIT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
NEXT
PREV
BACK
Starships

▲ This Resources entry compares different classes of starships, from the old Constitution class to today's Excelsior.

The Episode mode lists all episodes from the original series and *The Next Generation* as well as the first 20 episodes of *Deep Space Nine* and the first six movies. Each entry includes the series, episode number, author, director, Stardate, air date, a short synopsis, and a hyperlinked list of terms. Chronology mode offers a complete history of the universe, from its inception some 15 billion years ago to the 123rd century. Gregorian dates are used throughout to avoid confusion, particularly when researching pre-Federation periods.


EPISODE MODE
FIND
HELP
QUIT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
NEXT
PREV
BACK
"Naked Now, The"
Data smiles at Picard

▲ Episode mode lists all episodes by series or all together. This entry includes a photo that has been expanded to full size in a floating window.

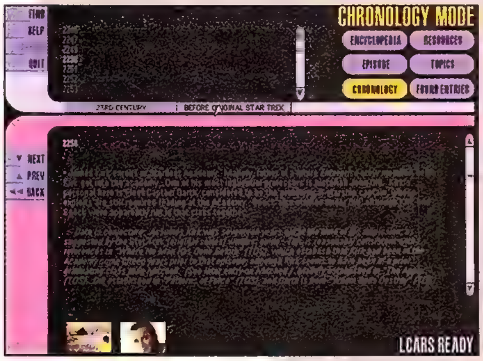

TOPIC MODE
FIND
HELP
QUIT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
NEXT
PREV
BACK
PLAY TOPIC
REW
PAUSE

James T. Kirk
Jean-Luc Picard
Star Trek Production History
The History of the Enterprise
The History of the Future

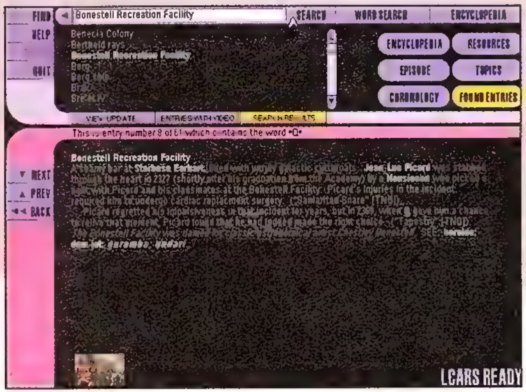
FOR MORE INFORMATION
Kirk, James T.
Kobayashi Maru scenario
Farragut, U.S.S.
Garrovick, Captain
Ruth ("Shore Leave")
Lester, Dr. Janice
Wallace, Dr. Janet
Shaw, Areel
Marcus, Dr. Carol
Marcus, Dr. David
Keeler, Edith
Enterprise, U.S.S.
Spock
McCoy, Dr. Leonard H.
V'Ger
Khan
fal-tor-pan
Khitomer
Enterprise-B, U.S.S.
Picard, Jean-Luc

▲ Topic mode presents five different multimedia presentations, including one on the legendary Captain (and later Admiral) James T. Kirk.

Three additional modes—Resources, Topics, and Found Entries—provide even more information for the religious fanatics called "trekkers" that flourished back then. Resources mode offers notes on all things Trek: an actors' index, bibliography, spaceships, lifeforms, planets, weapons, and many other types of data. The warp-speed chart is especially useful for calculating transit times between stars.


CHRONOLOGY MODE
FIND
HELP
QUIT
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
23RD CENTURY
BEFORE ORIGINAL STAR TREK
NEXT
PREV
BACK
LCARS READY

▲ Chronology mode presents a history of the *Star Trek* universe.


FIND
HELP
QUIT
Bonestell Recreation Facility
SEARCH
WORD SEARCH
ENCYCLOPEDIA
RESOURCES
EPISODE
TOPICS
CHRONOLOGY
FOUND ENTRIES
NEXT
PREV
BACK
LCARS READY

Help mode provides excellent information on how to use the *Omnipedia*. In this example, you simply place the cursor on any item on the screen and a description appears in the lower portion of the screen.

The Topics mode offers five multimedia presentations on different subjects: James T. Kirk, Jean-Luc Picard, *Star Trek* Production History, History of the *Enterprise*, and History of the Future (what we would simply call "history" today). These presentations are narrated by actor Mark Lenard, who played Spock's father Sarek as well as several other roles in the old shows. Each one is full of interesting tidbits, but I can't imagine I'd watch them more than a couple of times.

Finally, the Found Entries mode presents a list of all entries that include a word or phrase you've searched for. Oddly, the video clips from each movie and several episodes are only available here, not in Episode mode. The archivists were not thinking logically when they organized this data.

Naturally, any technology that's 400 years old will have problems. The biggest one occurred when I jumped from one mode to another: the software immediately starts accessing the data selected in the new mode's index, considerably slowing down the operation. The software should wait for user input before retrieving the selected information, as all programs do today.

Ultimately, I was able to find everything I looked for in the *Omnipedia*, which is high praise indeed. I'm trained as a scholar of *Star Trek* history, and I was unable to stump the database (though in a few cases, it took a little digging). In fact, the historical data is so accurate that I can't help wondering if Gene Roddenberry and his Trekker disciples were actually time travellers from the 24th century...

— Commander Scott Wilkinson

Silent Steel

A successful voyage through dangerous MPEG waters

WINDOWS
$69.95
Tsunami Media
(Distributed by Broderbund)
(800) 521-6263
(415) 382-4400

PROS
Quality video; excellent atmosphere and screenplay

CONS
Not enough gameplay

RATING ● ● ● ◐

♪ **Editor's note:**

This version is also compatible with software MPEG decoders, but the quality of the video will be reduced.

Written by Chuck Pfarrer (*Darkman*), *Silent Steel* also features a sense of humor.

Any gamer knows to be wary of "interactive movies." Rarely cinematic, often only marginally interactive, they are usually a disappointment. *Silent Steel* is *not* a disappointment—it's a handsomely produced film in which you make crucial decisions that will determine the fate of the free world.

Like any MPEG title, this game should be played through an MPEG decoder. I ran it with the Realmagic Lite board (no piece of cake to get working, I might add), and the full-screen, full-motion video really sold this game. There's also a non-MPEG version that uses AVI video in quarter-screen format, but that will only give a quarter of the action and atmosphere that makes this title work.

The story puts you at the helm of the *U.S.S. Idaho*, a nuclear submarine on patrol. A Libyan Kilo class sub has just slipped out of the Mediterranean and its intentions are unknown. After the initial report comes in, you're offered a set of options: Hunt the sub? Stay on patrol? Or contact a nearby carrier group? Each choice starts the action in a different direction that will lead to one of 30 possible endings. (Note: Most of these endings result in the demise of the free world.)

"What's the call captain?"

Portions of *Silent Steel* were filmed at the maritime museum at Patriots Point.

The action and atmosphere of this underwater adventure title make *Silent Steel* work.

Along the way, various crew members approach you, asking for decisions to be made, offering new pieces of information, or informing you of new problems.

What is the Libyan sub doing in your region, steaming at flank speed so everyone can track him? Why has another U.S. vessel taken a shot at you? How are you going to dodge that incoming torpedo? Should you: Drop countermeasures? Start evasive maneuvers? There are several options to choose from, but only a handful will keep you and your crew from an early, watery grave.

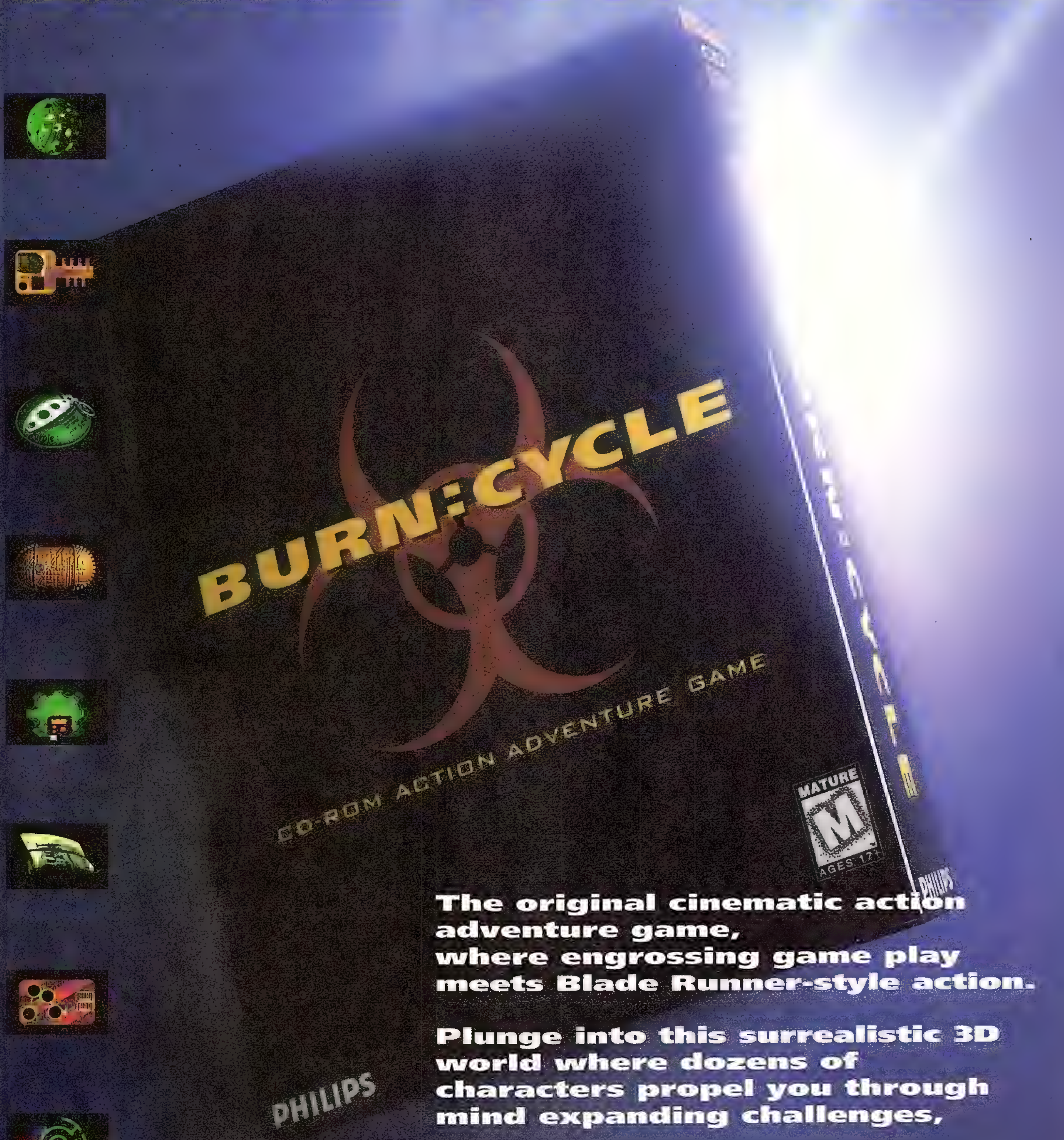
The video is shown from a first-person perspective. From the cook handing you a cup of coffee to the faces of your men as they die because you made the wrong choice, this title puts you onboard the *Idaho*. It's a quality interactive video—something that's hard to do right. But, like all titles in this genre, it's limited. So far, developers have only given us small doses of interactivity in their interactive movies.

Nonetheless, *Silent Steel* is an immersive experience. The sets, acting, and screenplay (by Chuck Pfarrer, author of *Darkman* and *Navy Seals*) are all top brass by today's standards. No, you won't mistake it for *The Hunt for Red October*, but you will be surprised at how good it is. And if you've been looking for a title that will effectively demonstrate what an MPEG card can do, you might want to track this one down.

— T. Liam McDonald

***Silent Steel* contains 300 minutes of full-motion video.**

USE YOUR BRAIN... OR LOSE YOUR MIND!


BURN:CYCLE
CD-ROM ACTION ADVENTURE GAME
MATURE
M
AGES 17+
PHILIPS
BURN:CYCLE
PHILIPS

The original cinematic action adventure game, where engrossing game play meets Blade Runner-style action.

Plunge into this surrealistic 3D world where dozens of characters propel you through mind expanding challenges,

to one shocking conclusion!

For Macintosh and PC Windows®

Product Information Number 166

http://www.burncycle.com

NFL Pro League Football; All-American College Football

Two coaching sims that break through the line

DOS
$42.95 each (estimated)
IBM Multimedia Studio101
(800) 426-7235

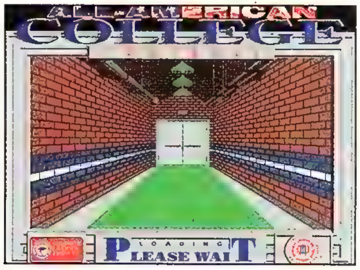
PROS
Excellent graphics; authentic coaching sim

CONS
Gametime lasts a bit too long

RATING ◉◉◉◐

Normally, I avoid coaching sims like a bad computer virus. Call me a control freak, but what could be more boring than watching a bunch of animated figures that you don't control run across your computer screen?

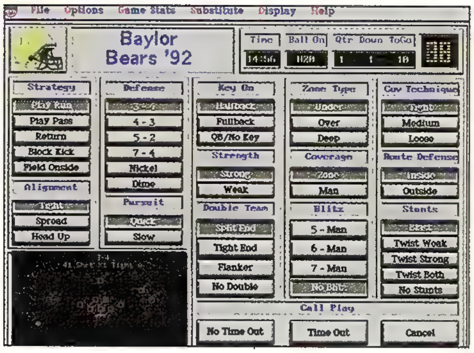
However, Micro Sports' *NFL Pro League Football* (*PLF*) and *All-American College Football* (*ALF*) might be the exceptions to the rule.



All-American **holds you in the gangway while you wait for the data to be downloaded from the CD-ROM.**

These are not your average strategy sims. Both *PLF* and *ACF* have enough hands-on control, options, and decision-making capabilities to keep even the most hardened John Madden wannabees entertained for hours.

Both titles allow you to do more than just call the plays on the field. You can create your own leagues, customize schedules, design game-winning plays, trade and draft players, and generally act like a head coach at the professional or collegiate level.



File
Options
Game Stats
Substitute
Display
Help
Strategy
Play Run
Play Pass
Return
Block Kick
Field Onside
Alignment
Tight
Spread
Head Up
Defense
3-4
4-3
5-2
7-4
Nickel
Dime
Pursuit
Quick
Slow
Key On
Halfback
Fullback
QB/No Key
Strength
Strong
Weak
Double Team
Split End
Tight End
Flanker
No Double
Zone Type
Under
Over
Deep
Coverage
Zone
Man
Blitz
5 - Man
6 - Man
7 - Man
No Blitz
Cov Technique
Tight
Medium
Loose
Route Defense
Inside
Outside
Stunts
Blast
Twist Weak
Twist Strong
Twist Both
No Stunts
Call Play
No Time Out
Time Out
Cancel

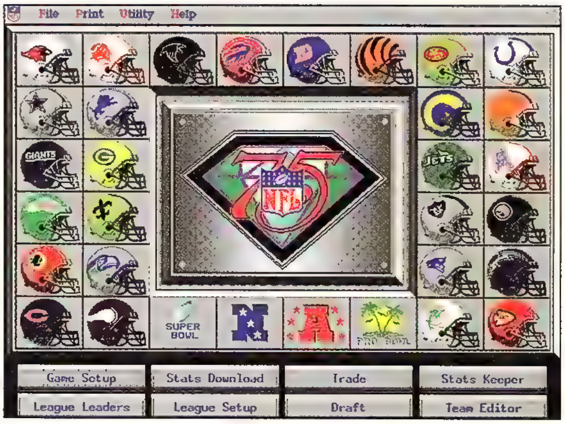
Baylor Bears '92
Time 14:56
Ball On H20
Qtr 1 Down 1 ToGo 10

A coach's best friend: the play card.

Since *PLF* and *ACF* were both licensed by the National Football League and most of the country's top college programs, you'll be virtually coaching real-life teams and players.

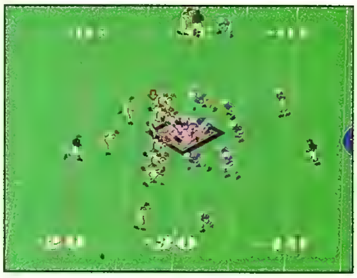
The teams are originally programmed with their 1994 season roster. If your favorite team didn't have a great year during the 1994 season, no problem. You can reprogram most of the teams with players and stats from rosters dating back to the sixties. You can download these teams by calling a toll-free number supplied by Micro Sports.

The programmers of *PLF* and *ACF* have left nothing to chance. All situations, from goal-line stands to special teams, are covered. If the 198 preset plays are not enough, however, you can create your own in the Define Play mode. In that mode, you can modify certain preset parameters, such as formation, ball carrier, pass routes, and blocking schemes. After resetting all the parameters, the computer picks a similar preset play and then adds your modifications to it. The result is an almost limitless number of plays to pick from and create.



File
Print
Utility
Help
SUPER BOWL
Game Setup
Stats Download
Trade
Stats Keeper
League Leaders
League Setup
Draft
Team Editor

You may coach your favorite pro team or create your own.



Pro League **lets you control any NFL squad.**

One of the best options both *PLF* and *ACF* offer is their use of modem play. Although the computer is a very challenging opponent, there's nothing like going head-to-head with another human being. You can take on anyone, anywhere, anytime. You can also talk a little trash in the modem chat mode.

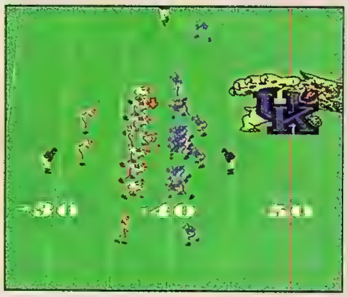
However, both titles have quirks. For example, both are played in DOS, but you have to download all the team data from the CD-ROM before each game. This can take an average of almost three minutes. Calling up a saved game is also a bit odd—you actually have to start playing another game before you can call up a saved one.

And some of the realism goes a little too far. Playing one game is a major time investment; the average game takes between 70 and 90 minutes to complete. A game between two passing teams could take more than two hours to finish.

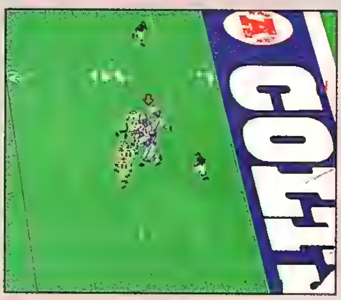
Despite these quirks, *PLF* and *ACF* are two of the top coaching sims on the market.

—Andrew Miller

THE GAME'S THE SAME

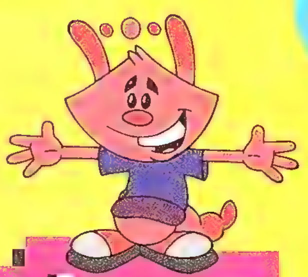


◀ ***All-American College Football. . .***



. . . looks nearly identical to its *Pro League* cousin. ▶

Available for PC CD-ROM



NICK JR. Play Math!

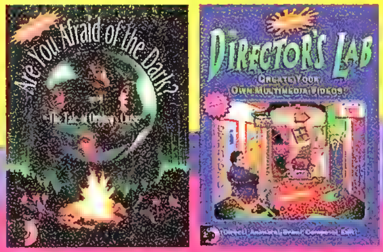
Where Kids Play to Learn

Introducing Nick Jr. Play Math!, the first in an important new line of preschool software from Nickelodeon™. This innovative CD-ROM challenges and nurtures little kids' imaginations as it welcomes them to the exciting world of math. Kids learn early quantitative skills such as counting, comparison, sorting, classifying and patterns.

Nick Jr. ensures a supportive and challenging experience your child will want to return to again and again. Play Math!...and let the learning begin.

- Developed in close collaboration with child development experts.
- Nick Jr. Play Math! advanced technology monitors your child's every move and automatically responds to each interaction for a fresh learning experience each time.
- Special Parent Features let you monitor your child's progress.
- Over 25 activities and 5 open-ended creative play areas.

Ages 3-6


Are You Afraid of the Dark?
The Tale of Orpheo's Curse
DIRECTOR'S LAB
Create Your Own Multimedia Videos!

Also available on CD-ROM
For kids 6-11

RATING PENDING RP ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE RATING BOARD

VIACOM newmedia

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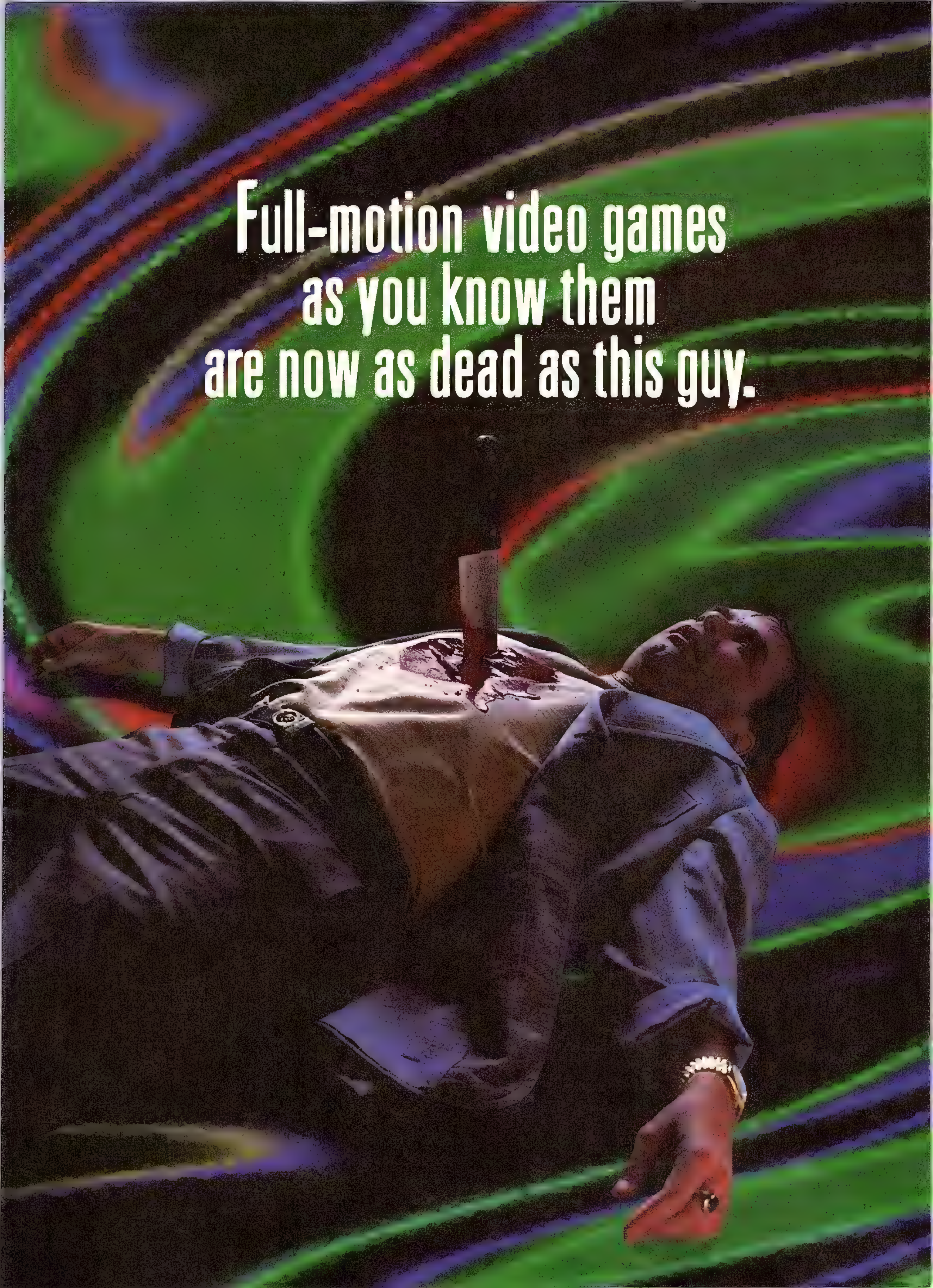
Product Information Number 1[illegible]5


Full-motion video games
as you know them
are now as dead as this guy.

Yeah, we know full-motion video games in the past sucked.

But we solved that mystery. Now it's up to you to solve this one.

Capture a vicious killer by jumping from one suspect's mind to the next. The story unfolds through their point of view. Seamless, real-time video requires you to make life-saving decisions instantly. So if you sit around and don't interact, someone's going to turn up dead. Which is bad, since you're supposed to be collecting clues, not corpses.

ELECTRONIC ARTS STUDIOS
3DO
MATURE M AGES 17+
PC CD
PlayStation
(COLOSSAL)PICTURES

Psychic Detective™

http://www.ea.com/eastudios.html

Product Information Number 122

COMING SOON
A ROGUE SUBMARINE, A TRAITOROUS PLOT, AND THEY SAID THE COLD WAR WAS OVER...
"This all-video strategy adventure is the most advanced cinematic game ever released."
Computer Game Review
A TSUNAMI MEDIA PRODUCTION
SILENT STEEL
AN INTELLIGENT MOTION PICTURE ON 4 CD ROMS
Product Information Number 16
Ask for SILENT STEEL at your local software retailer.
TSUNAMI
Distributed by Brøderbund Software, Inc. © 1995 Tsunami Media, Inc. All rights reserved

Super Sunday Volumes 1, 2, and 3

The football trivia buff's dream

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
Less than $20 each
U.S. Gold
(415) 693-0297

PROS
Stuffed with Super Bowl records, stats, and video

CONS
Not as much fun the second time around

RATING ●●●

U.S. Gold's *Super Sunday* series is an encyclopedia of Super Bowls. Available on three separate CD-ROMs, this reference package has every anecdote, statistic, and obscure piece of information from all 29 Super Bowls. Even the football know-it-alls will learn something from *Super Sunday.*

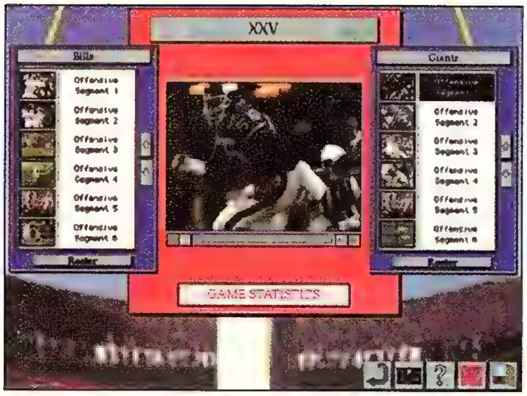
There are more than 1,000 still images and three hours of video from Super Bowl I to Super Bowl XXIX, narrated by Fox's Pat Summerall. In addition to the video and pigskin pictures, you'll also get individual player and team statistics from each game.

Super Sunday is easy to use, and the mouse-driven interface is quite simple. You just point and click on whatever Super Bowl image, statistic, or piece of video you want to explore and it appears on your screen. If the information you want is on another disc, it will tell you which disc you need to complete your search.

In Super Bowl XXI, the New York Giants crushed the Denver Broncos, 39 to 20.

Super Sunday does have some minor problems, however. Some of the still images are a little out of focus, as is the video. A note on the box describes the title as interactive, but it's actually very passive. And since the information is not randomized, this title doesn't offer much incentive for repeat use.

If you're merely a casual football fan, you'll quickly grow bored. But if you're hungry for information about any of the Super Bowls, *Super Sunday* is just the ticket. — *Andrew Miller*


XXV
Bills
Offensive Segment 1
Offensive Segment 2
Offensive Segment 3
Offensive Segment 4
Offensive Segment 5
Offensive Segment 6
Roster
Giants
Offensive Segment 2
Offensive Segment 3
Offensive Segment 4
Offensive Segment 5
Offensive Segment 6
Roster
GAME STATISTICS

Video clips, albeit fuzzy ones, are available for each of the 29 Super Bowls.

C.E.O.

New version of old game never gets down to business

DOS
$59.95
I-Motion
(800) 443-3386
(310) 576-1888

PROS
The train and bus sim elements are mildly amusing

CONS
Disparate game elements never come together

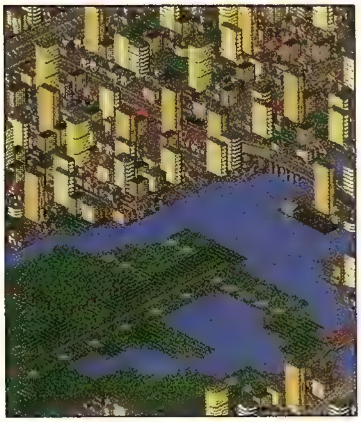
RATING

Old-time gamers may remember a title from a few years ago called *A-Train*—a Japanese train simulator that tried to blend *SimCity* with *Transport Tycoon* and failed. It did enjoy some success, however, and went through several incarnations until Infogrammes and I-Motion found it and decided to transform it into a full corporation sim.

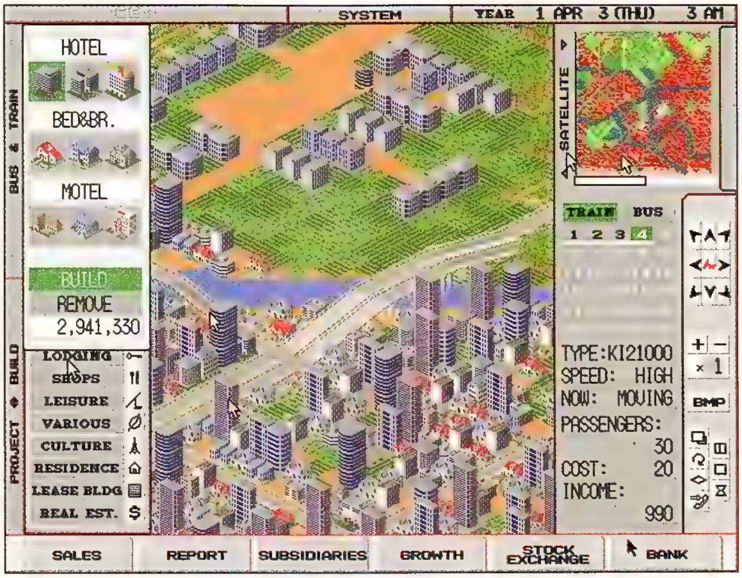
As *C.E.O.* begins, Dwight Owen Barnes, head of megacorporation A-IV, has mysteriously vanished and you must take over for him during his absence.

At first glance, *C.E.O.* seems to have a lot going for it. Both CNN and *Investor's Business Daily* lent their names to the project, and CNN even provided video announcements. I-Motion got James Coburn to play Dwight Barnes, who briefs you on his "disappearance" at the beginning of the game and challenges you to prove yourself worthy of his position as CEO. However, Coburn's brief appearances are irrelevant to actual game play.

The scenarios you'll play are all built around *SimCity*-like perspectives of Berlin, London, Washington, and seven other locations. At the start of each scenario, you have various challenges to face in making A-IV successful in that city. Most of these challenges seem to revolve around making the trains and buses run on schedule. Gameplay works on a number of other levels, but none of them seem to have been very well thought-out. And it's often hard to discern how one level impacts another.



Night and day show the passing of time—and of interest—in *C.E.O.*


SYSTEM
YEAR 1 APR 3 (THU) 3 AM
BUS & TRAIN
HOTEL
BED&BR.
MOTEL
BUILD
REMOVE
2,941,330
PROJECT ◆ BUILD
LODGING
SHOPS
LEISURE
VARIOUS
CULTURE
RESIDENCE
LEASE BLDG
REAL EST.
SATELLITE
TRAIN
BUS
1 2 3 4
+ −
× 1
BMP
SALES
REPORT
SUBSIDIARIES
GROWTH
STOCK EXCHANGE
BANK

TYPE:KI21000
SPEED: HIGH
NOW: MOVING
PASSENGERS: 30
COST: 20
INCOME: 990

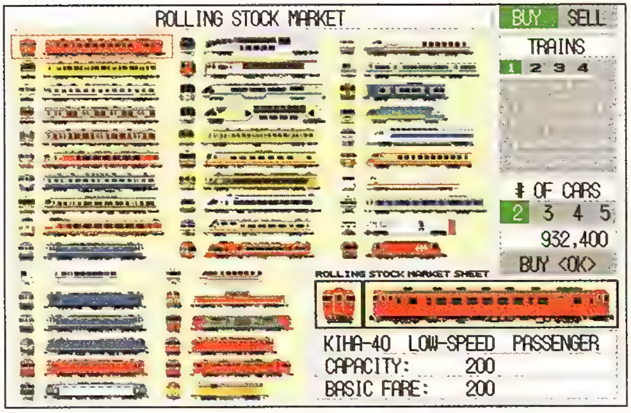
You can build hotels, motels, and other businesses in *C.E.O.*, but finding out just how successful they are isn't all that easy.

For example, you must "invest in companies," which basically means placing factories, businesses, and homes wherever you can for maximum profit. Next, you have to buy stock in a number of other companies to expand A-IV's holdings. One would think that a major company buying lots of stock would affect the market in some fashion, but this doesn't seem to be the case. You can also buy subsidiary companies and perform other transactions, but it's often hard to tell how gameplay is affected since very little information is available on how well (or poorly) you're doing.

It's obvious that *C.E.O.* is built on a transportation simulator, since buying trains and buses and setting schedules takes a disproportionate amount of time and effort. Even this element, however, is half-baked, and is handled much better in other titles.

C.E.O.'s game play is an odd mishmash of construction, transportation, and trading that never jells and never gives a sense that a megacorporation is at work. The interface is clumsy, the graphics marginal, and the paucity of feedback and data makes play confusing. When you pile stock options and city construction on top of a train sim, you don't get a corporation sim—you get a mess.

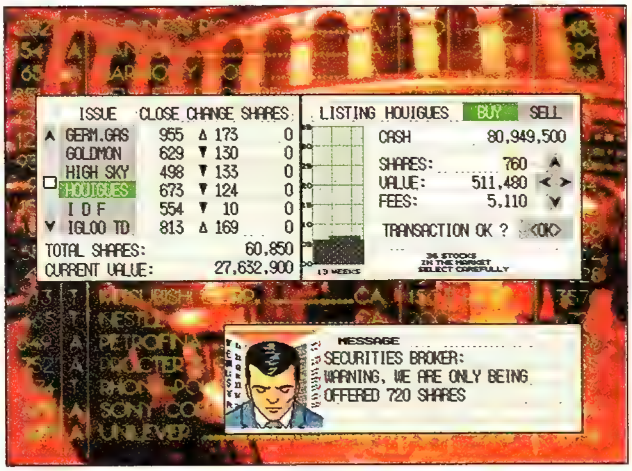
— T. Liam McDonald


ROLLING STOCK MARKET
BUY
SELL
TRAINS
1 2 3 4
# OF CARS
2 3 4 5
BUY <OK>
ROLLING STOCK MARKET SHEET

932,400

KIHA-40 LOW-SPEED PASSENGER
CAPACITY: 200
BASIC FARE: 200

There are lots of trains and buses to buy, but in a far less fascinating manner than Microprose's *Transport Tycoon*.


BUY
SELL
TRANSACTION OK ? <OK>
13 WEEKS
36 STOCKS IN THE MARKET SELECT CAREFULLY
MESSAGE

ISSUE	CLOSE	CHANGE	SHARES
GERM.GAS	955	▲ 173	0
GOLDMON	629	▼ 130	0
HIGH SKY	498	▼ 133	0
HOUIGUES	673	▼ 124	0
I D F	554	▼ 10	0
IGLOO TD	813	▲ 169	0

TOTAL SHARES: 60,850
CURRENT VALUE: 27,632,900

LISTING HOUIGUES
CASH 80,949,500
SHARES: 760
VALUE: 511,480
FEES: 5,110

SECURITIES BROKER:
WARNING, WE ARE ONLY BEING OFFERED 720 SHARES

The game play in *C.E.O.* takes place in real-time, which means you have to buy and sell stocks between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

It's audio. It's video. It's interactive.

the cranberries
doors and windows
ISLAND
PHILIPS
RAINBOW™ CD-ROM product compatible with:
CD AUDIO • WINDOWS • MACINTOSH • CD-i • DIGITAL VIDEO

watch this record.
Listen to this software.

The cranberries take you on an interactive journey through moving images and naked truths.

- Doors and Windows is the first Rainbow™ CD-ROM. It's a single disc that plays on:
  - CD audio
  - Windows computers
  - Mac computers
  - CD-i players
  - MPEG-1 players

Doors and Windows features:

- Over ten minutes of QuickTime™ interviews and exclusive backstage video
- Rare personal photos, clippings and the band's own collection of memorabilia
- Exclusive video clip of the cranberries performing "Zombie" live at Woodstock '94
- Five previously unreleased tracks including demo, acoustic and live versions of the #1 hit "Zombie"

ISLAND

For more information, call: 1-800-340-7888 or reach us online at: http://www.cranberries.com/doors

Philips Media

[illegible]

Product Information Number 167

Power Pete

An action hero's job is never done

MAC
$29.95
MacPlay
(800) 4622-7529
(714) 553-3530
Ages 8 and up

PROS
Excellent scrolling; speedy gameplay

CONS
Unimaginative premise

RATING ● ● ● ●

A toy store comes alive when the last human leaves. Amidst the fun and chaos, a toy—or a multitude of toys—gets into trouble and an action hero must come to the rescue. Yes, it's an old premise, but an enjoyable one just the same.

In this arcade-style game the superhero is named Power Pete, and he's taken on the job of rescuing an endless supply of endangered "fuzzy bunnies." It's a tough job, but somebody's got to do it.

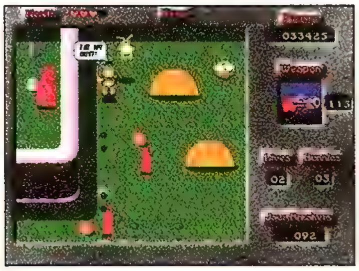
As befits a superhero, Pete is rather short on words. "No more Mr. Nice Guy!" "Eat my dust!" and "Don't worry, I'll save you!" are just about the extent of his vocabulary.

There are separate departments for your bunny-hunting enjoyment; the exact number is determined by the difficulty setting. Regardless of which setting you choose, Pete always starts off in Prehistoric Plaza, where he makes his way through three different levels of cavemen, dinosaurs, bubbling tarpits, and action-hero-eating plants.

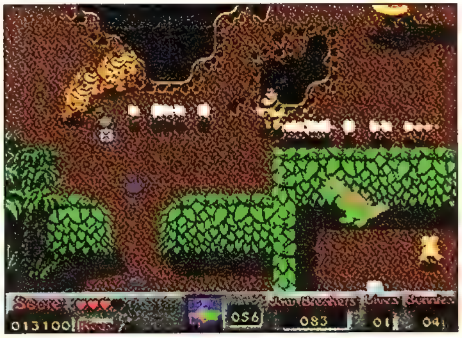
If you're playing at the highest level of difficulty, you'll eventually end up at Bargain Bin land. This is a place so mysterious that even Sergeant Joe, the narrator of the most excellent game manual, has yet to make it there. Hopefully, by the time you get there, you'll be ready for anything an old discount toy can throw at you—but don't count on it.

Power Pete boasts excellent, age-appropriate graphics, an incredibly easy interface, and the smoothest scrolling action this side of a dedicated quarter muncher from the local arcade.

—*J. Daniel Jones*



Just because it's sugar and spice, does not make everything nice—ya gotta watch what you eat in Candyland.



Power Pete's job: avoid the dinosaurs and rescue the bunnies.

1830 Railroads and Robber Barons

A slow ride on the schizophrenic railroad

DOS
$45
Avalon Hill Game Company
(800) 999-3222
(410) 254-9200

PROS
Gives a fresh approach to familiar subject matter

CONS
Doesn't really allow for free-wheeling, open-ended gameplay

RATING ● ● ●

Ever wondered what it would be like to be a ruthless capitalist in the wide-open days of the wild west? *1830* takes you there.

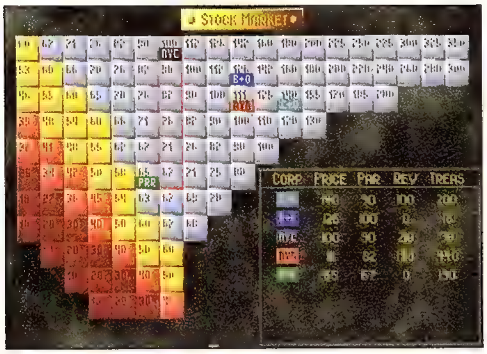
In *1830* you assume the dual role of railroad company president and robber baron. As baron, you must earn more money than your competitors by speculating on the stock market and investing in railroads. As president, you lay track, buy trains, build company profits, and pay stock dividends.

Sometimes these roles may conflict. For example, the baron may have to gut a company to invest in more lucrative stocks. Conversely, the president may withhold dividends from stockholders (like the Baron) to invest in new trains.

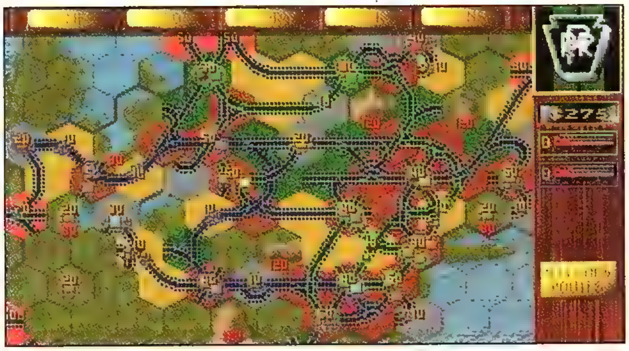
When the map screen is filled with tiles and the bank is broken, you add up assets and the person with the most wins. As a computer game, it's a little lean in some areas. Gameplay doesn't last very long and only a few strategic elements come into play. Other titles in the Tycoon genre are large, sprawling canvasses on which to paint an empire. The *1830* disc is a miniature sketch—interesting but small.

In the end, it's an enjoyable game that needs a few more elements to make it truly compelling.

— *T. Liam McDonald*



This confusing stock market track shows you where you stand in relation to other players.



On the main map screen, you lay track in tiles to connect important regions.

Burn:Cycle

This title's hot, very hot

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$49.98
Philips Media
(800) 340-7888
(310) 444-6600

PROS
Stylistic sets and soundtrack add to the atmosphere

CONS
Sluggish play control

RATING ● ● ● ●

Philips' *Burn:Cycle,* a futuristic adventure game originally developed for the CD-i machine, sets itself ahead of the crowd in this genre with its unique mix of digitized images and real interactivity.

The game begins with our hero, Cutter, all alone in a cyber city with just about everybody after him. His mission: to uncover a sinister plot involving a fatal virus.

Although he barely knows enough to sense trouble brewing, Cutter sets out to make things right in the world. Upon losing his would-be partner to a violent and wrongful death, Cutter soon finds himself waist-deep in a conspiracy that threatens everything in its path. It will take the cool demeanor and steady nerves of a true hero to prevent the impending disaster that lies within the world of *Burn:Cycle.*

Taking into account all the elements of a major motion picture, *Burn:Cycle* draws you into its twisted plot with a certain fury, and doesn't let you go until you've either saved the day or fallen prey to its ever-present danger. With much of its cinematic feel coming from the rich soundtrack, it should be no surprise that the futuristic music plays an integral part in setting the dark mood of the game. The techno beats and digital rhythms help create the setting of a world not quite our own, yet hauntingly familiar. The mood is made complete by the shadowy sets and vacant feel of the city that Cutter sets out to explore.

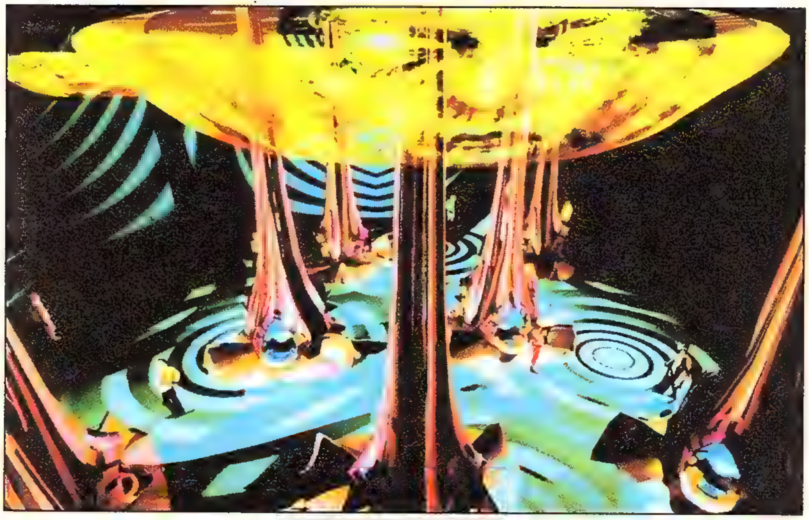
Although *Burn:Cycle* is primarily a strategy game, it provides a fair amount of shoot-'em-up action.

Our fearless hero, Cutter, in a great deal of pain.

To get an idea of *Burn:Cycle's* playability, start with the frame-by-frame exploration style of *Myst* and add animation between the stills. What you are left with is a world to explore as you interact with a variety of instruments and people along your way. Though the movement through the game is somewhat sluggish at times, it's not sluggish enough to compromise the success of this title. With occasional cut-scenes added in for story-telling purposes, *Burn:Cycle* does well to move you through the important elements of the plot while allowing you to maintain the feeling of control. Much of the action is also based on gunning down bad guys who are constantly jumping out from behind objects, attempting to end your mission prematurely.

The strategy elements of *Burn:Cycle* are just deep enough to make the game challenging, but not so challenging that you find yourself pondering them late at night. Though this side of the game could not exactly be described as mind-bending, it is just wild enough to be really fun.

Burn:Cycle manages to immerse you in adventure while adding a certain accuracy missing in most games of this genre. The advanced playability and overall stylistic approach to game design make this title something special. And the next time you cruise the Internet, be sure to check out the *Burn:Cycle* Web site at **http://www.burncycle.com** for gaming tips and information. *—Patrick Baggatta*


Clues that will help you solve the mystery of *Burn:Cycle* can be found at this bizzare public access information station.

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Available for Macintosh and new Windows '95, where you'll experience lightning-fast gameplay. *Al Unser, Jr. Arcade Racing* will leave all other racing games in your rearview mirror. So strap yourself in and get ready for the ride of your life!

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Novato, CA 94949

Product Information Number 160

Endorfun

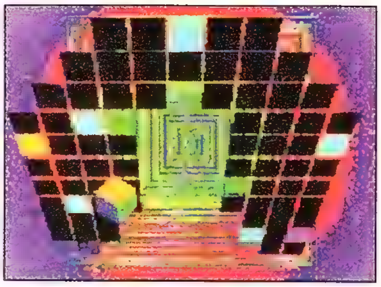
Don't worry, be happy

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$29.95
onesong partners
(Distributed by Time-Warner Interactive)
(800) 482-3766
(818) 295-6600

PROS
Stunning graphics, great music, and utterly addictive

CONS
Stewart Smiley-like positive affirmations can grate on your nerves

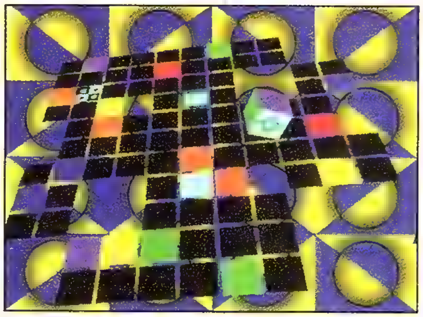
RATING ● ● ● ● ●



Endorfun: **Groovy music, compelling gameplay, and the best light show since 1967.**

Years from now, people checking into the Betty Ford Clinic for Addictive Game Disorder will look back at *Endorfun* as the cause of it all. A weird marriage of *Tetris*, a Grateful Dead light show, and a Tony Robbins personal enrichment seminar, *Endorfun* is a game you simply have to play to believe. It's mindless, addictive, and just a little bit spooky.

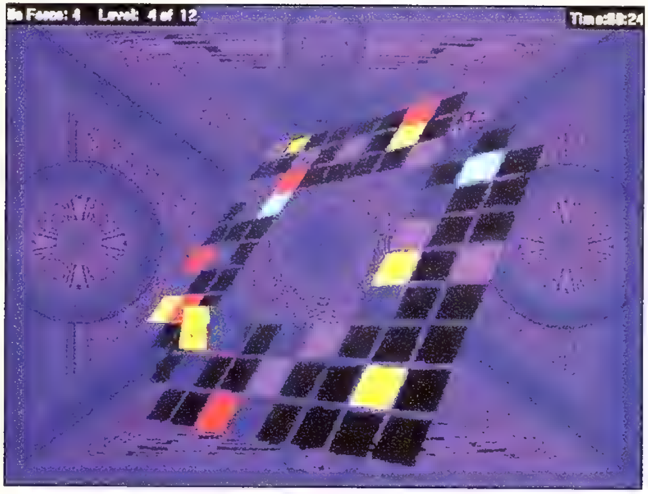
Here's the deal: Using the mouse or cursor keys, you move a multicolored cube (the "light body") over a three-dimensional grid (the "unified field") so that it lands on a flashing "life force square" with the right color showing. Gather up enough life force on one level and you transcend to the next, where the grid changes shape, the squares start to move, and obstacles block your path and eventually entrap you.



Move the "light body" over the grid to land on the flashing square.

Fortunately, you don't have to master each level of *Endorfun* before you can move on. Instead, you can pick from a list of 42 games with names like "Tilt," "TranceDance," and "Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha," which range from easy to impossible. In some games, the point is to gather up life force as quickly as possible. In others, it's to stay "alive" as long as you can, or to rack up points within a specified time limit.

All the while, *Endorfun* lulls you with a world-beat-meets-dinner-jazz soundtrack and a pulsating light show that could induce acid flashbacks. But wait, it gets better. Buried within the soundtrack are subliminal messages such as, "I create joyous abundance" or "In my own way I am a genius." Between games, other positive affirmations roll across the screen (my favorite: "All your cells function properly"). Note: Those who fear being turned into mindless zombies can substitute sound effects for the groovy music or run the game in silence.



Endorfun's **psychedelic visuals can leave you dazed and euphoric.**

Of course, *Endorfun* isn't likely to get your pulse racing, and all this enforced mellowness would probably drive *Doom* fans into a homocidal rage. That's because the game is designed with one point in mind: to make you feel good. The scary part is that it works. Play this game, and life suddenly seems a whole lot more bearable, even for a jaded cynic like myself.

There. I feel better already.

— Daniel Tynan

GAS
FOOD
NUCLEAR
MELTDOWN
SIM CITY 2000
CD COLLECTION
MAXIS
Available for DOS, Mac/PowerMac, and Win/Win 95. CD-ROM only.
Product Information Number 152

Flight of the Amazon Queen

This adventure is a drag

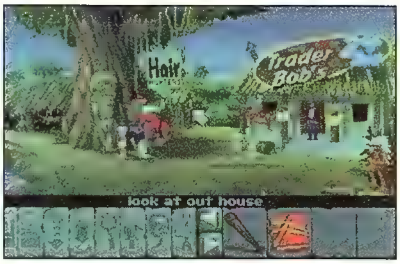
DOS
$20 estimated
WarnerActive
(800) 693-3253
(818) 840-6329

PROS
Humorous story line

CONS
Primitive graphics; dated game setup

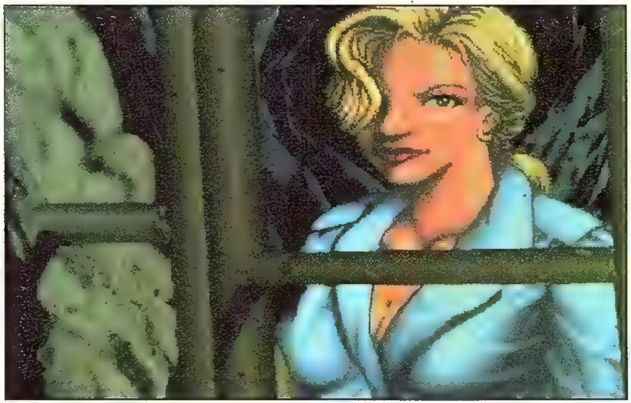
RATING ● ● ◐

It's a classic scenario: Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy puts on girl's clothing. All the movies seem to be doing it, and now Warner Active is getting into the act with *Flight of the Amazon Queen*. The story is classic B-movie material, centering around a rough and tumble pilot, Joe King, and his hapless exploits.



Amazon **employs the usual "look at, pick up" commands.**

Of course, you play Joe and your task is to fly famous Hollywood starlet Faye Russell to her next film shoot in the Amazon (hence the title). Your competitor, however, has stymied you by spiriting the bombshell away to his rival airline and locking you in her hotel room. To make your escape you must use a wig, fake breasts, and a dress—you may want to watch *The Crying Game* to pick up a few pointers.



Meet Faye Russell, Hollywood bombshell and star of *Amazon Queen*.

Flight of the Amazon Queen is full of one-liners and is actually quite amusing. Unfortunately, in the age of adventure titles like *Under a Killing Moon* and *Phantasmagoria*, this game's graphics just don't compare. *Amazon Queen* looks a little faded even when put next to *last* year's adventure games. The graphics are in plain 320x200 mode, and Joe King's face is basically a couple of dark spots and a line. In fact, all the graphics are primitive. Sure, *Flight of the Amazon Queen*'s $20 price point makes it a decent buy, but it should look at least as good as, say, *Space Quest*.

Unlike adventure games of yesteryear, *Amazon Queen* can be played almost completely from the disc. That means none of your precious hard drive real estate is taken up by the game. And unlike older games, *Amazon Queen* uses high-quality voice-overs. Joe's gruff voice, the mobster's exaggerated Italian accent, and the idiot bellhop at the hotel counter are all very entertaining comic exaggerations.

Who is this guy? *Amazon*'s cheesy graphics make it hard to tell.

The interface, however, is standard old-time fare—several buttons line the bottom of the screen for your basic actions, such as drop, use, move, and talk. Like most graphic adventure games, *Amazon Queen* becomes a pixel hunt. As you find the objects, you pick 'em up and try to use them in different places until something works. The puzzles, however, are a step above ordinary. And forcing the predominantly male gamer audience to cross-dress has its comic value, I guess.

Considering this game's formulaic game setup and out-of-date graphics, *Amazon Queen* is seriously out of step with current gaming fashions.

— *Bernie Yee*

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STARLIGHT ROOM
CLASS OF '76
REUNION
27TH FLOOR
GRAND BALLROOM
AXELROD
WEDDING
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50 MILLION
COCKROACHES
SIM TOWER
MAXIS
Available for Mac/PowerMac and Win. 3.5" floppy and CD-ROM.
Product Information Number 153

RAINFOREST
HOTELS
ALIEN LANDING SITE
SIM ISLE
Missions In The Rainforest
MAXIS
Available for DOS.
Coming for Win 95 and Mac.
CD-ROM only.
Product Information Number 154

Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure

Arcade classic swings into Windows 95

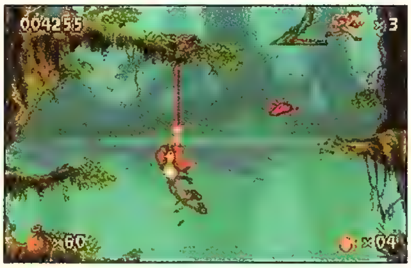
WINDOWS 95
$39.95
Activision
(800) 477-3650
(310) 473-9200

PROS
Great sound, cool animation, and exceptional gameplay

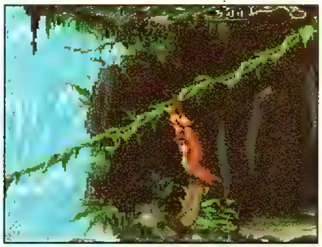
CONS
Only three new levels for those who own the Sega or Nintendo version

RATING ●●●●◐

Back in 1982, when Bill Gates was barely a millionaire and Windows was just a twinkle in his eye, Activision released the first version of *Pitfall* for the Atari 2600 system. *Pitfall* introduced the concept of the side-view scrolling action/adventure game, setting the standard for an extremely popular genre.



In *Pitfall*, you must take to the vines to stay out of the reach of hungry alligators.

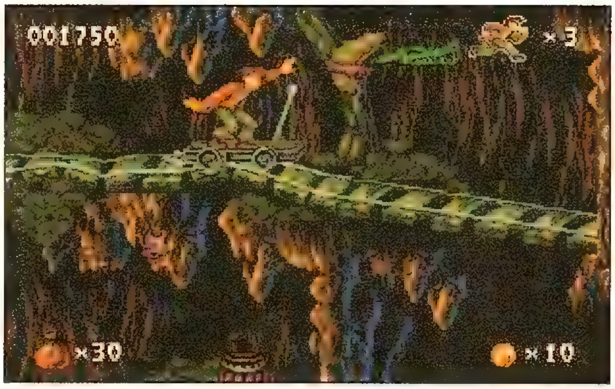

Ride this Omega-bar across the jungle vines.

Thirteen years and a few game systems later, a Windows 95 version called *Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure* has hit the market—a move that should please old-timers and new gamers alike. Activision's new adventure is the first game to take real advantage of Windows 95's enhanced game capabilities, offering painless installation, incredible sound, smooth animation, and responsive game mechanics.

Pitfall melds the adventuresome quality of the Indiana Jones movies with the feel of an addictive, side-scrolling game like Nintendo's *Donkey Kong*. As the son of the original game's Pitfall Harry, you must search for your father through 13 treacherous yet beautiful levels of wilderness and rescue him from the clutches of "an evil Mayan warrior." Though not exactly politically correct, this plot tends to be more contemporary than its predecessors, which typically involved saving a damsel in distress.

As with most platform games, you must walk, run, duck, crawl, jump, and shoot your way to victory. There are also a variety of hidden moves and surprise locomotive techniques—such as a wild ride on a pulley attached to a vine. And unlike many PC games, *Pitfall* rewards experimentation. I found an unpublished off-the-wall 360 move by just putzing around.

The most impressive part of this excursion through the subtropics is the realistic sound effects, from the crack of your whip to the *sprong* of a bungee cord. You also get two choices for background sounds: an original musical score or ambient jungle noises recorded in the rain forests of Central America, both of which stream directly off the CD.



You'll need to balance on this railcar as though you're riding a skateboard.

Those unfamiliar with the nuances of arcade-style platform games may find *Pitfall*'s learning curve a little steep, but callous-thumbed game vets will get plenty of challenging action. And expert gamers will enjoy searching out the game's secret rooms—including an entire secret level that's a replica of the original Atari 2600 game, crude graphics and all.

—Jeffrey Adam Young

see it on the Disc!

Ascendancy

Cumbersome game of galactic conquest

DOS
$45
The Logic Factory
(distributed by
Broderbund)
(800) 521-6263
(415) 382-4400

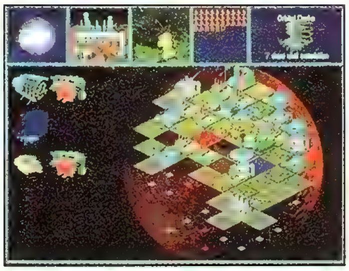
PROS
Fantastic graphics, and you can use a variety of strategies to win

CONS
Too many details to keep track of; interface is easy to master but annoying to use

RATING ● ● ●

It's been said that a novel can spring from one of only 150 possible plots. It seems that for video games, the number of plot options is significantly less.

Consider the theme of territorial conquest. Equipped with little more than a pioneering spirit, you set out to colonize the wilderness and spread the gospel of truth. In *Ascendancy*, that dream of conquest takes places on a galactic scale. Unfortunately, it offers little more than what you'll find in any other strategy titles.

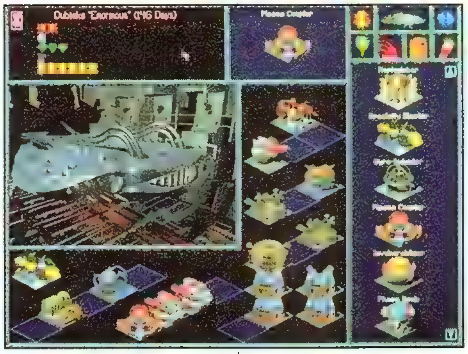


***Ascendancy*'s Planet screen displays your progress at building research facilities, factories, and agricultural operations on the planets in your control.**

You start out with one meager outpost, and you must balance the happiness of the settlers with the need to spur industrial development. Sound familiar? When you accumulate enough resources, you can explore and colonize other worlds. Later still, you'll bump into alien races, whom you must ultimately conquer. So much for the doctrine of victory through nonviolent means.

Ascendancy does have several good points, including luscious graphics. You can populate the galaxy with as many as seven of 18 different races—each with their own characteristics and predispositions—and the galaxy itself can be filled with tens of thousands of worlds. Because there are so many possible outcomes you could play the game thousands of times and always have it come out different.

The game also emphasizes strategic planning over shooting and destruction, but even in an "average"-size galaxy, you'll soon find yourself trying to control so many planets that it becomes impossible to keep track of them all. You can't just colonize a world and leave it to its own devices; you must nurture each colony during every step of its development or risk losing it.

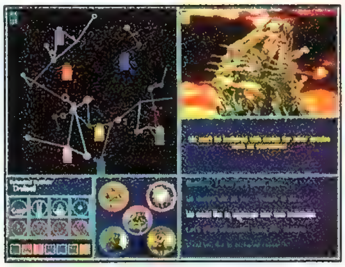


You'll need to build ships in order to colonize other planets and repel the attacks of invading species.

You won't find *Ascendancy*'s user interface much help either. With emphasis on point-and-click simplicity, properly allocating the resources of more than five planets is enough to induce a case of repetitive stress injury.

Basically what we have here is *Civilization* on a galactic scale—and, not unlike *Civilization*, there is no two-player mode: It's you versus the computer. Granted, the computer is a challenging adversary, but with no means of keeping track of the game's numerous intricate details, and a mouse-bound user interface that will infuriate most users, *Ascendancy* can't count on a quick rise to the top.

—Rich Pizor



Depending on your strategy, you can form diplomatic relations, trade knowledge, or declare war on the other species inhabiting the universe.

SIM CITY 2000
SIM TOWER
SIM ISLE
MAXIS

It's a SimWorld. Get lost in it.

With Maxis as your travel agent, you never know where you'll land next. The SimCity 2000 CD Collection puts you in the Mayor's Mansion—just in time to handle disasters like Hurricane Hugo. SimTower offers a breathtaking view atop your financial empire—too bad there's a five-alarm inferno in progress. And our newest destination, SimIsle, lets you rule a lush rainforest where it's the wildlife vs. the warlords. The Sim games. No restrictions apply.

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Product Information Number 155

6:02 AM – WOKE UP IN DUMPSTER.

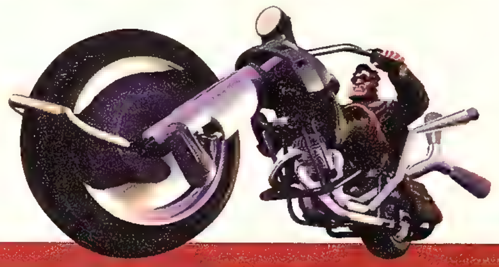
7:03 AM – HAD TEQUILA WITH CORN FLAKES.

9:31 AM – PUNCHED OUT THE BARTENDER.

12:02 PM – CALLED MOM.

6:31 PM – KICKED THE CRAP OUT OF 18 BIKERS.

MIDNIGHT – TOOK A RIDE AND NEVER LOOKED BACK.



You're Ben. You're on the road. You're indestructible.
And you'll do whatever it takes to clear your name from a bum murder rap.
Like fighting ugly gangs with futuristic bikes and Neolithic weapons.
Running big-rigs off the road at 100 mph. Making people pay.
But that's what happens when you live your life at "Full Throttle."

Your biker adventure awaits you on PC CD-ROM. Call 1-800-STARWARS for availability.

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Product Information Number 150

FULL THROTTLE

See it on the Disc!

MechWarrior 2

A new standard in gaming

DOS
$59.95
Activision
(800) 477-3650
(310) 473-9200

PROS
Excellent gameplay, graphics, sound, and music; everything a gamer could want and more

CONS
Tricky to control and master; steep system requirements

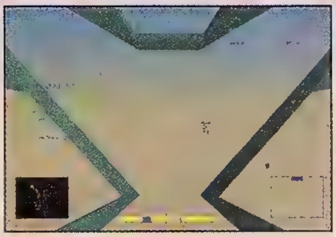
RATING ● ● ● ● ◐

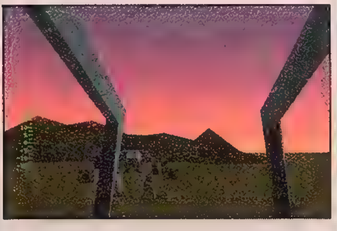
Just when it seemed as though no title could live up to its advance hype and expectations, Activision released a game that does. *MechWarrior 2* brings action/sim games to a new level, exploiting the latest technology to provide a challenging, entertaining, and technically superb robot combat sim.

Set in the 31st century, the *MechWarrior* story revolves around warring clans duking it out in massive, bipedal war machines, known as Mechs. The two primary clans, the Wolf and Jade Falcons, are at each others' throats, sending their armies of heavily armed robotic behemoths against each other in a never-ending cycle of violence. As a new pilot for either side, you must bring your clan victory and do so with honor in order to ensure success and rise through the ranks.

The jaw-dropping intro sequence is one of the best we've seen.

IN YOUR SIGHTS


Some landscapes make it hard to find enemy Mechs.


In others, you're nose to nose with the enemy.

You begin as a lowly cadet, suffering through a series of challenging tutorial missions to hone your combat skills. It's here that you discover *MechWarrior 2*'s treats.

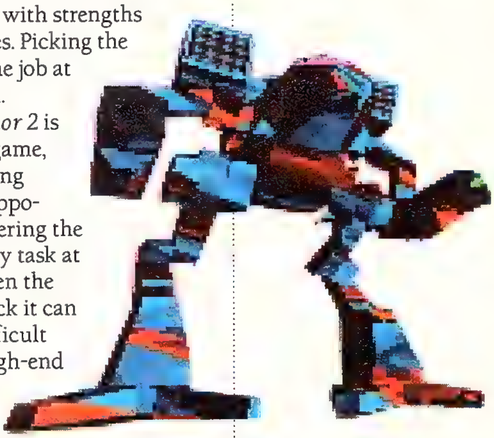
The graphics are sumptuous, with display resolution running from 320x200 to 1,024x768 SVGA. At the highest-detail levels (which even top-notch Pentiums will have trouble with), you can see such detail as the clan insignia on the side of the enemy Mechs. Even on 640x480, the view through the cockpit of your Mech is stunning. With the fabulous sound effects and music, you get an immersive experience of going into combat against enemy robots.

When you finish the tutorial missions, you'll be ready for some quick, customizable action. As you get better, you're put at the head of a squad. Get your men killed, however, and your honor suffers (reflected in a reduction of points and possibly rank). In each mission you can outfit yourself with a custom Mech, which you can modify down to weapons loadout, heat sinks, engine, and so forth. There are over a dozen Mechs available, each with strengths and weaknesses. Picking the right one for the job at hand is crucial.

Check out the headquarters of the Jade Falcon clan.

MechWarrior 2 is a demanding game, with challenging controls and opponents. Maneuvering the Mech is a tricky task at times, and when the action gets thick it can be a rather difficult game. With high-end flight sim controls and a need for strategy and planning, this is not your average kill-'em-all game. *MechWarrior 2* demands a lot of computer systems and gamers alike, but it delivers like nothing else around.

— *T. Liam McDonald*



Meet your Mech—a two-legged missile-packing killing machine.

Supreme Warrior

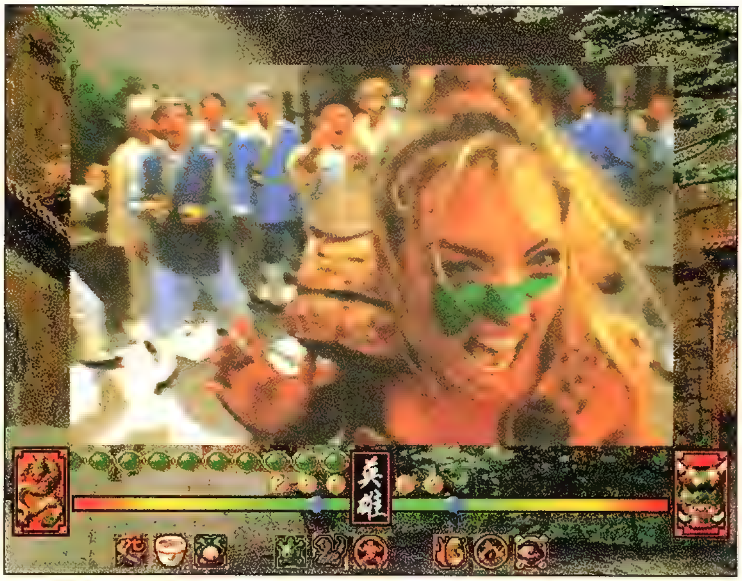
Video fighter sacrifices control

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$49.95
Digital Pictures
(800) 332-0032
(415) 345-0445

PROS
Sharp format; striking appearance

CONS
Poor gameplay; lack of control

RATING ● ● ◐



The taunting by *Supreme Warrior*'s high-strung villains helps draw you into the action of this Full Motion Video fighting game.

Ask gamers what they really want, and they'll say reliable play control and a real sense of interaction. This is not to say that many people are not impressed by the sharp video presentation in a game like *Supreme Warrior*. This first-person fighting game unquestionably looks great, thanks to its reliance on Full Motion Video (FMV). But when you add Full Motion Video, you usually lose some ability to control your character's actions. And hard-core gamers are not likely to buy action games that lack control.

A dramatic opening sequence establishes *Supreme Warrior*'s Far Eastern setting, with just enough intro material to get you into the story line of the game. From then on there is a nice focus on the actual gameplay—beat the bad guys to a pulp. There is some cinematic filler from time to time, but it's done well, and you can always skip these scenes with the push of a button.

You might ask whether *Supreme Warrior* needed to be made in Full Motion Video. One argument in its favor is the beauty of the location in which the game was shot. The rich colors and lush backgrounds really do add a great deal of flavor to the game. There are also some vivid enemy characters that work well because of their convincing costumes and makeup. It would be difficult to argue that any kind of animation could have the same effect. However, since video must rely on quick scene cutting to produce the illusion of control, there is some choppy animation to deal with here.

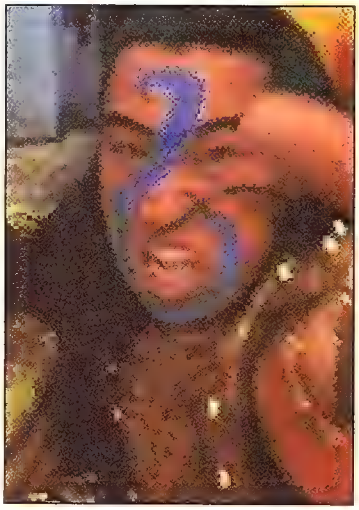
In the late beta version we reviewed, *Supreme Warrior* failed most dramatically on the most important aspect of the FMV requirements—player control. *Supreme Warrior* has an unacceptable amount of delay in reaction to key commands, ranging from a frustrating stagger to a complete lack of response. In a fighting game, where there is only a brief window for you to make the appropriate attack, (such as a right hook to the jaw), there is simply no time for sluggish controls. This flaw instantly makes *Supreme Warrior* a second-class citizen in the genre of action gaming.

The concept of an FMV fighter is dangerously close to being a novelty to begin with, so this game had a great deal to prove from the beginning. It would be difficult to argue that *Supreme Warrior* doesn't succeed on any level, but unfortunately it fails quite convincingly in the single most important aspect—gameplay. This makes it impossible to consider *Supreme Warrior* a real success.

— Patrick Bagatta

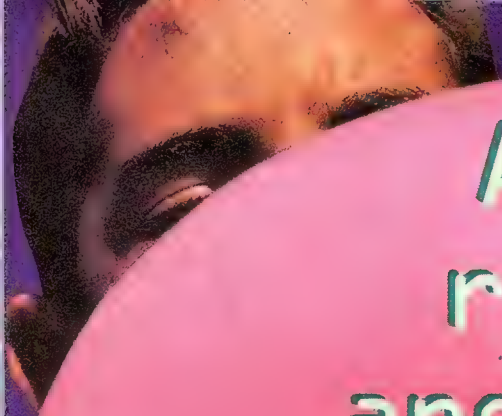
Most of the characters in *Supreme Warrior* are interested in causing you some serious hurt.

Fortunately, some people are willing to offer a bit of helpful advice.



The enemies' costumes and makeup add a touch of menace to this title.

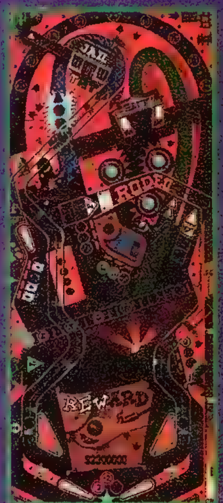
Choosing the right move at the right time is what *Supreme Warrior* is all about.



"...the most intense pinball experience that you can get outside an arcade."
Chris Gore
Computer Player

Any more realistic and you'd be pulling gum off the bottom of your computer.

WILD WEST



BLACK JACK PANEL GAME

This is just one of 11 Psycho Pinball panel games!

Yeah, yeah, you hear a lot of that "realistic" noise from game makers. But, hey, four tables to choose from, high speed, ultra-smooth scrolling, multiball feature and 3-way tilt. The proof is in the performance.

It's real. It's psycho. It's Psycho Pinball for PC CD-ROM.

TRICK OR TREAT

PSYCHO FUN FAIR

THE ABYSS

PSYCHO PINBALL

COMING SOON!

Perfect Motion

Codemasters

PHILIPS

For more information call 1-800-340-7888. Visit our Web Site at http://www.philipsmedia.com/media/games

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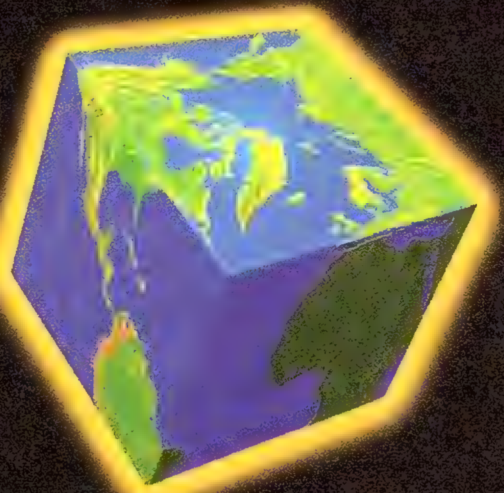
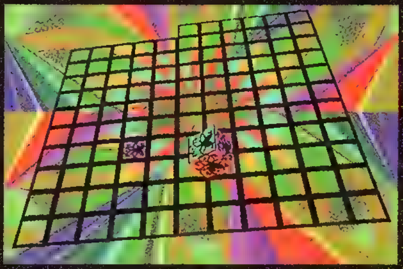
Product Information Number 168

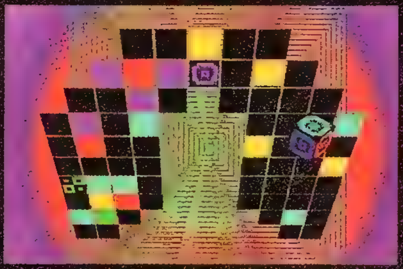
PLAY MORE. FEEL BETTER.





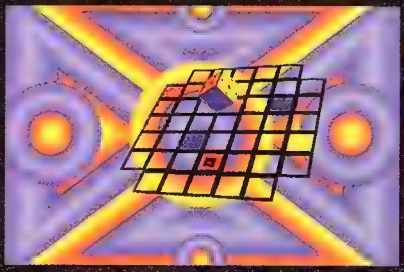
Challenging Gameplay

Maneuver the multi-colored "Light Body" cube over the "Unified Field" grid absorbing the "Life Force." Forty mesmerizing games, hundreds of levels and your choice of three strategies: play for points, beat the clock or go for longevity.



Original World Music Soundtrack

Play to the uplifting beat of Endorfun's original world music, composed and performed by the incredible O Band. Within the soundtrack are more than a hundred positive messages designed to make you feel better about yourself and your world.



Stunning Visuals

Graphically stunning and visually dynamic, Endorfun presents an ever-changing landscape of pulsating, kaleidoscopic animations. Endorfun is an entertainment experience that's positively fun.

Endorfun™

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
AGES 6+

Coming this fall on CD-ROM for Windows, Macintosh, Sony Playstation, Sega Saturn.

TIME WARNER
INTERACTIVE

onesong

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Product Information Number 181

SimIsle: Missions in the Rain Forest

You put the lime in the coconut and stir it all up

DOS
$39.95
Maxis
(800) 526-2947
(510) 933-5630

PROS
A variety of interesting scenarios with plenty of minute detail, plus injections of personality and humor

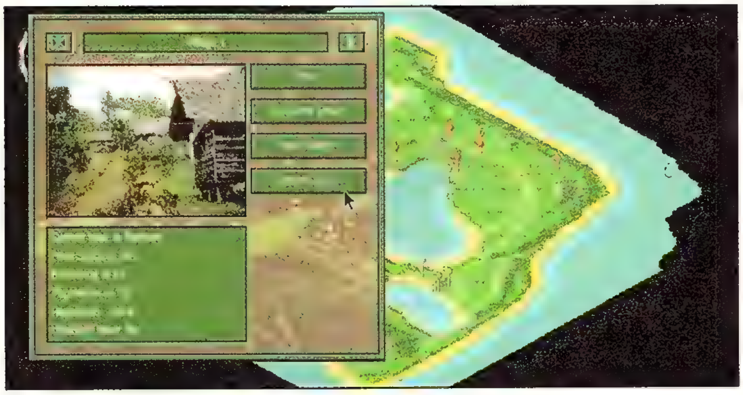
CONS
A somewhat clunky interface, only average graphics

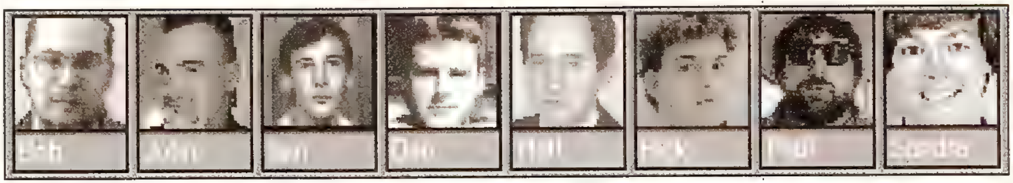
RATING ● ● ● ◐

SimCity and its ilk became monster hits because we all have an opinion about how the world should be managed, and we all know *we* could do it better. In *SimIsle: Missions in the Rain Forest,* you get the opportunity to manage more than just a city or an apartment building—you get to manage the politics and ecosystems of a 25-island archipelago.

The premise is simple, but the execution can be devilishly difficult. You're in charge of a group of 25 agents, each of whom is stationed on one of the islands. Each island has its own assets and liabilities, along with a native populace that must be either placated or ignored, depending on your strategy.

An island rich in natural resources might be on the verge of becoming a battleground, with big business on one side, environmentalists on the other, and the indigenous population caught in the crossfire. Another island might be a haven for drug cartels, while another harbors an endangered species. Your job is to marshal your agents, train them for specific duties, and place them on the island where they will be most effective at serving your purposes.


You'll find a number of villages and other sites on *SimIsle*'s islands, each with its own special problems.


Managing your staff is the most critical aspect of *SimIsle.* Sometimes it's worse to send the wrong person to a particular area than to send no one at all.

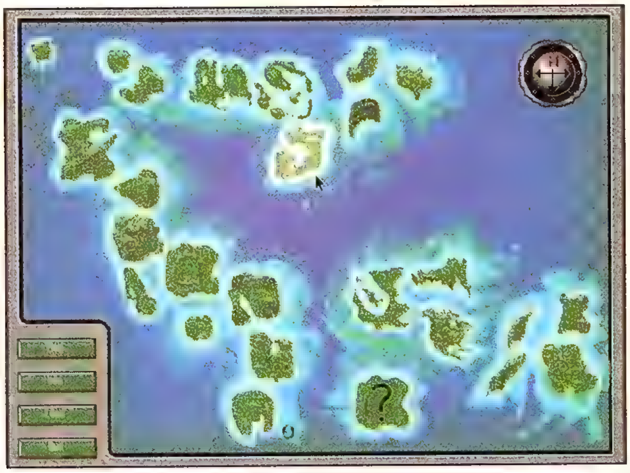
Once you've set up a scenario, you'll find it doesn't take long for things to start hoppin', thanks to the personalities of your agents, the capricious nature of the island residents, and a host of other factors, including the environment. One thing you *won't* have to worry about is French nuclear weapons testing.

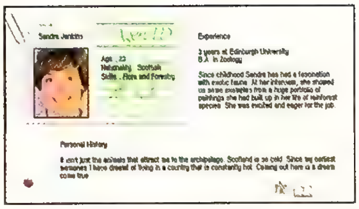
You'll find a bit of droll humor in *SimIsle,* too. If you know your geography, for instance, you'll be able to identify one of the islands as the United States. The scenario objective for this "island" (titled "Them Good Ol' Boys") is to make as much money as you can, regardless of the environmental consequences. Lest you think the game's British designers are dumping on us Yanks, you might recognize another island nearby. The scenario for this one (titled "Up for Sale") involves turning the place into a big tourist trap.

The game's graphics, which include still photos and video clips, are good but not exceptional. The user interface, however, is more than a little clunky. The game runs under DOS and requires considerable upper memory to function. Unless you have Windows 95, which will automatically allocate enough memory for the game, you'll want to create a boot disk that will prevent your extended memory manager (such as EMM386) and any other TSR utilities from loading.

SimIsle is a different creature from Maxis' other sim games; it's more closely related to strategy games like *Powerhouse.* Still, you'll find the manipulation of minutiae that's characteristic of this genre, and if you're a fan you'll like this game.

—*Gary Meredith*


Choose from one of 25 islands, plus a tutorial island. The Info button will let you know what you're getting into before you take the plunge.


Sandra Jenkins

Age: 23
Nationality: Scottish
Skills: Flora and Forestry

Experience

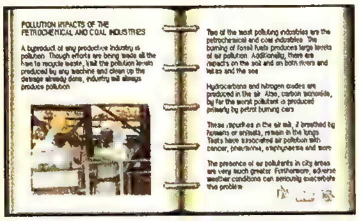
3 years at Edinburgh University
B.A. in Zoology

Since childhood Sandra has had a fascination with exotic fauna. At her interview, she showed us some examples from a huge portfolio of paintings she had built up in her life of rainforest species. She was excited and eager for the job.

Personal History

It isn't just the animals that attract me to the archipelago. Scotland is so cold. Since my earliest memories I have dreamt of living in a country that is constantly hot. Coming out here is a dream come true.

Study each dossier carefully and try to fit the person to the job. If you need someone to train villagers, you won't want to send an oil expert.


POLLUTION IMPACTS OF THE PETROCHEMICAL AND COAL INDUSTRIES

A byproduct of any productive industry is pollution. Though efforts are being made all the time to recycle waste, limit the pollution levels produced by any machine and clean up the damage already done, industry will always produce pollution.

Two of the most polluting industries are the petrochemical and coal industries. The burning of fossil fuels produces large levels of air pollution. Additionally, there are impacts on the soil and on both rivers and lakes and the sea.

Hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides are produced in the air. Also, carbon monoxide, by far the worst pollutant is produced primarily by petrol burning cars.

These impurities in the air will, if breathed by humans or animals, remain in the lungs. Tests have associated air pollution with cancer, pneumonia, emphysema and more.

The presence of air pollutants in city areas are very much greater. Furthermore, adverse weather conditions can seriously exacerbate the problem.

Consult your notebook often: It can provide valuable information on an island's resources and social structure.

Crime Patrol

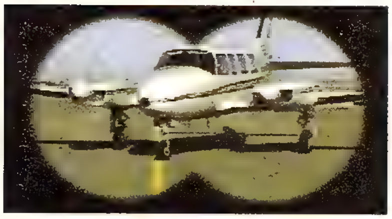
Doom meets Starsky & Hutch

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$49.95
American Laser Games
(800) 880-1718
(505) 837-5406

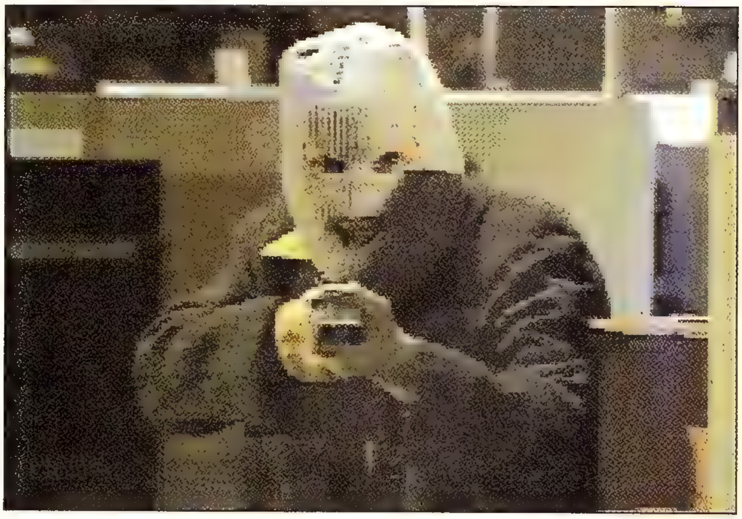
PROS
Captivating, fast-paced video play with cheesy yet satisfying violence

CONS
Sharpshooters may blow through this title in a hurry; inappropriate for young players

RATING ● ● ●



Each case opens with a video segment that adds to the adventure and entertainment.



As you move through each scene in *Crime Patrol*, crooks appear at seemingly every turn.

American Laser Games' *Crime Patrol* is not a game you'd want to play with your kids. But if you've ever wondered what it's like to play a TV cop, this arcade-style shooter really makes you feel like you're doing the job.

You play an up-and-coming cop whose job is to nail the bad guys involved in each full-motion video scene. Do your job well (i.e., kill all the crooks in three crime scenes), and you'll move up a level in the department ranks. Whack an innocent bystander—or, even worse, your partner—and you're immediately thrown off the force.

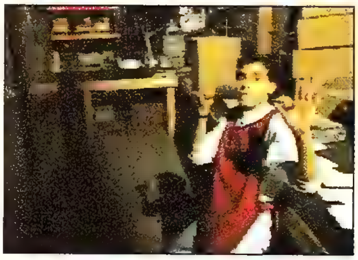
After you solve your first series of cases, you're promoted to detective. Your partner, who bears a strong resemblance to Detective Sipawitz on *NYPD Blue*, helps you go undercover—and heaps abuse on you when you screw up. This is where realistic violence meets graphic adult subject matter. (Be sure the kids aren't in the room when you hit the video strip club.)

When you reach the higher levels, the action gets faster. As a S.W.A.T. agent, for example, you must charge through drug shacks and other tight settings infested with some of the ugliest bad guys in the business. At this level you have to hit your intended target on the first shot because *these* guys never miss. Make it to the Delta Force, and your job gets even harder: The innocent bystanders have been taken hostage and you have to shoot around them.

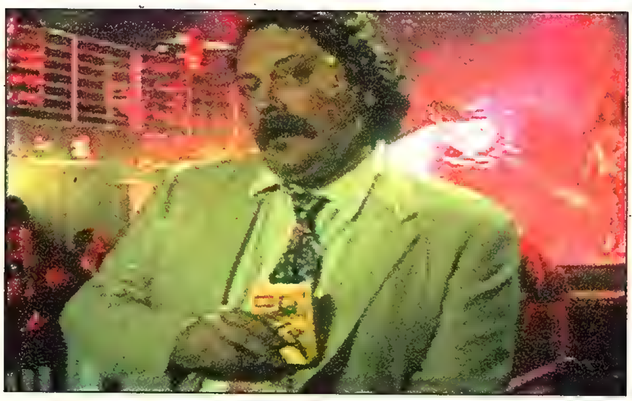
Mature players will see *Crime Patrol* as "Starksy & Hutch 95"—a familiar kill-or-be-killed story with a QuickTime dimension. To reach that dimension, however, the game had to make some compromises in speed and difficulty; it's designed to keep you on edge rather than shooting until your mouse finger blisters. And while playing *Crime Patrol* isn't exactly a stroll through the park, it's possible to make your way through the ranks in a few hours. One reason for this is that the video is only slightly randomized; the bad hombres usually appear in the same spots from one clip to the next.

But the game's visuals are lively and its scenes are dramatically different. That's another reason why sharpshooters may blow through this title—they'll want to find out what happens next. It's not appropriate for all players and it's not a game that you'll play forever. Still, *Crime Patrol* is addicting, amusing, and usually on target.

—*Doug Lombardi*

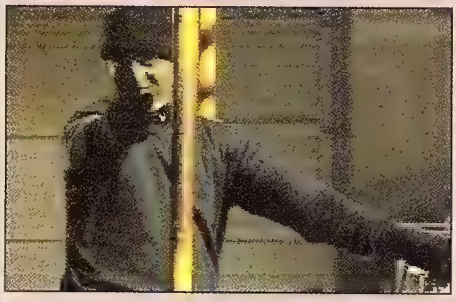


Hit an innocent bystander in *Crime Patrol*, and you're immediately thrown off the force.

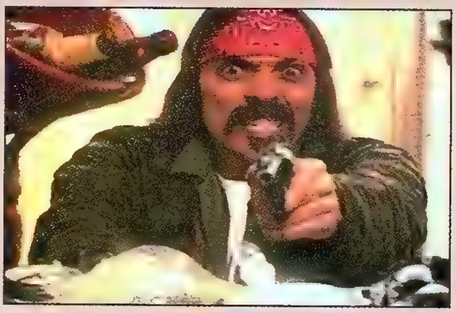


One of your partners bears a strong resemblance to Detective Sipawitz on *NYPD Blue*.

SHOOT FIRST . . .



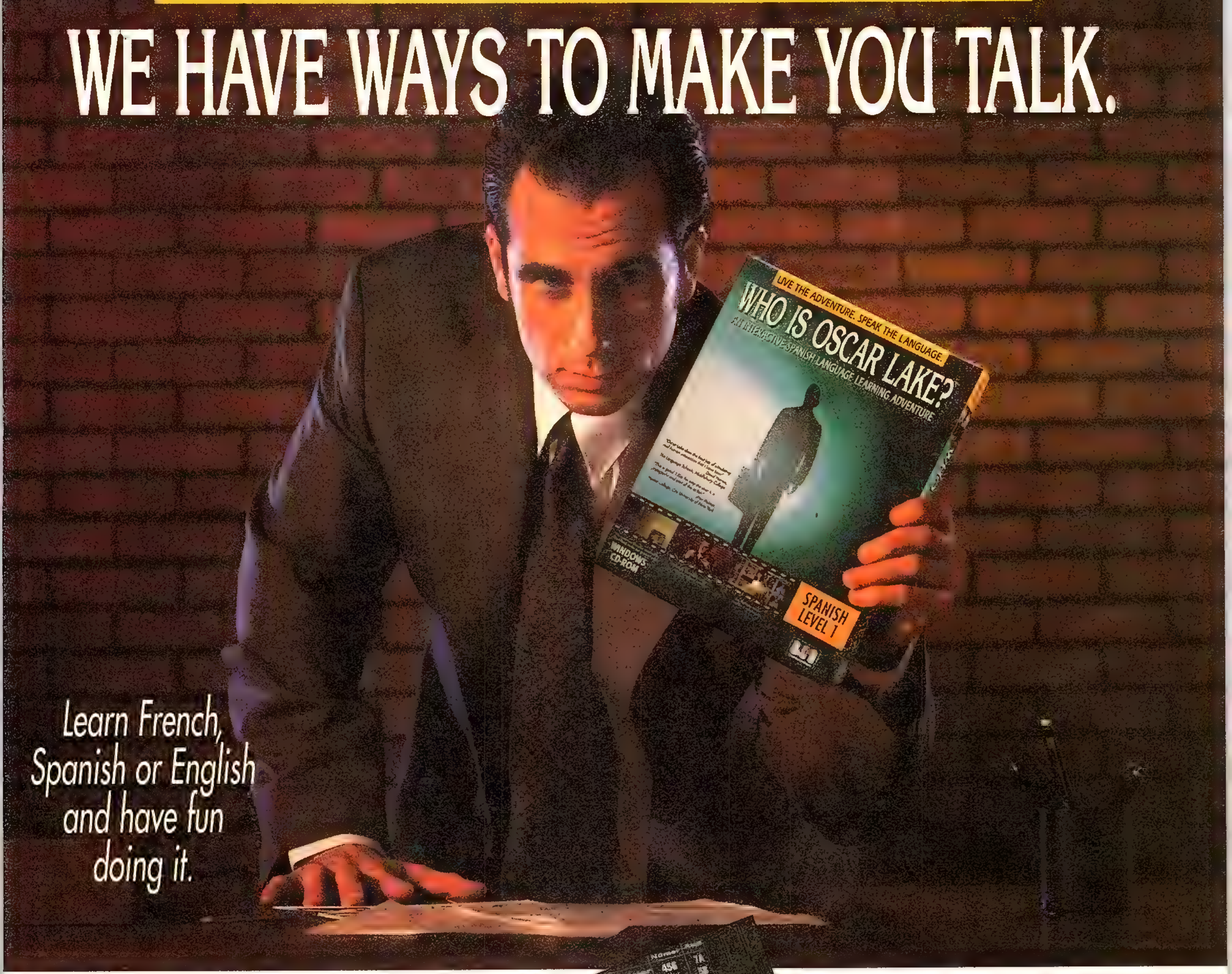
It's a matter of survival — shoot them before they shoot you. . .



. . . but these bad guys are so ugly that killing them becomes a pleasure.

LIVE THE ADVENTURE. SPEAK THE LANGUAGE.

WE HAVE WAYS TO MAKE YOU TALK.


LIVE THE ADVENTURE. SPEAK THE LANGUAGE.
WHO IS OSCAR LAKE?
AN INTERACTIVE SPANISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ADVENTURE
WINDOWS CD-ROM
SPANISH LEVEL 1

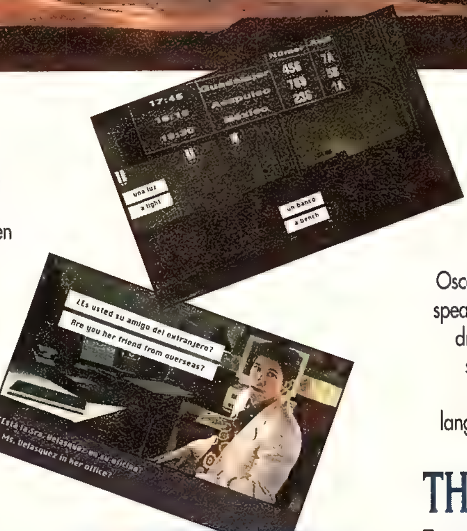
Learn French,
Spanish or English
and have fun
doing it.

YOU'RE ON THE SPOT

"The Light", a precious jewel has been stolen from a famous gallery. Suddenly, you're a prime suspect under interrogation in police headquarters. But you're from out of the country, and you don't even speak the language! That's just the start of your adventure.

DEVELOPED BY LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS

Is this any way to learn a language? Actually, according to many experts it may be the best way. With Who Is Oscar Lake,™ you'll be continuously interacting with native speakers. You'll need to respond to keep your adventure moving, through hotels, train stations and everyday settings. But don't worry, you can get instant translations for anything you, or the characters you meet, will say. You can even point and click at hundreds of objects on the screen for word translations.


17:45
Guadalajara
Acapulco
México
una luz
a light
un banco
a bench

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Product Information Number 147

The Last Dynasty

Attempt at stylish sci-fi tale is a confused mess

WINDOWS
$54.95
Sierra On-Line
(800) 757-7707
(206) 649-9800

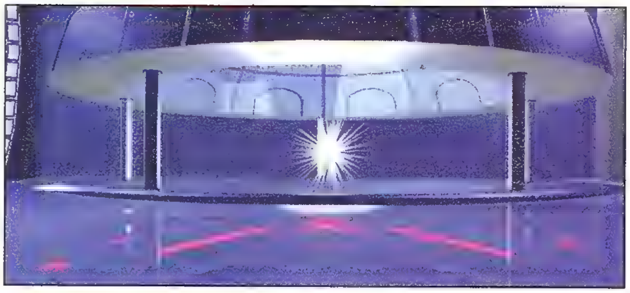
PROS
At least it's an attempt at something different

CONS
Confusing story, half-baked gameplay

RATING ● ●

Try as they might, developers have found it extremely difficult to produce games that successfully blend arcade elements and adventure gaming. When neither element is well executed, their failures are particularly notable. Take Sierra On-Line's badly flawed *The Last Dynasty*, for example.

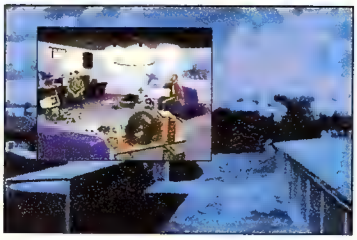
Dynasty begins with six space combat sequences, each of which is linked by cliché-filled narrative scenes that seem like desperate attempts to move the story along. After completing the sixth combat mission, you embark on a protracted adventure game as you explore a space base; then you return to a space shoot-'em-up for six missions until the game is over.



"The Ultimate Knowledge." Weren't you just dying to know what it looks like?

The story revolves around Mel, an earthling who learns that he is the heir to a galactic dynasty. Mel also discovers that he is the keeper of one half of "The Ultimate Knowledge," although it's not at all clear what this is. The other half is kept by Mel's heretofore unknown twin brother Lem ("Mel" spelled backwards—get it?), who has been kidnapped by the evil warlord Iron. Iron, of course, craves "The Ultimate Knowledge" for his own nefarious purposes.

As Mel, your mission is to fight your way to Iron's base (the first six arcade sequences), make your way through the base to retrieve "The Ultimate Knowledge" (the adventure game sequence), and finally destroy Iron (the final six arcade sequences).



***The Last Dynasty* is half arcade combat game, half role-playing adventure, and wholly uninteresting.**

I found *The Last Dynasty's* arcade sequences decidedly unexciting and the adventure game on Iron's base a by-the-numbers series of object manipulations. When all is said and done, this game is hardly worth noting.

— *T. Liam McDonald*

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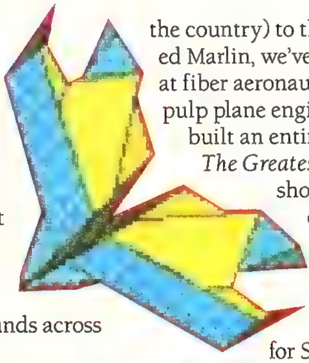
Product Information Number 176

see it on *the* Disc!

The Greatest Paper Airplanes

Fifty ways to build a glider



Mindscape's *Greatest Paper Airplanes* is a return flight to the days of constructing your patented jet under your desk and launching it when the teacher wasn't looking. From the basic Dart (a sleek aircraft that holds a dominant place in school playgrounds across the country) to the more sophisticated Marlin, we've all tried our hand at fiber aeronautics. In my day as a pulp plane engineer, I must have built an entire fleet of Darts.

The Greatest Paper Airplanes showed me a few designs to add to my repertoire—50 to be exact. Included on the CD were designs for SSTs, fighters, and some experimental models.

Some of these planes, however, are anything but easy to construct. They all look great on the computer, but the more complex ones lost something during the construction process. Most of the planes require a dozen folds, and somewhere between the beginning crease and the final fold, the wings and things became quite crooked. My version of the Wildebeest, for example, resembled a Wildebeest but flew like an ostrich. Luckily, *The Greatest Paper Airplanes* has an animated step-by-step tutorial that walks you through each plane.

And as a bonus, there are several essays included that origami enthusiasts and flight historians will thoroughly enjoy.

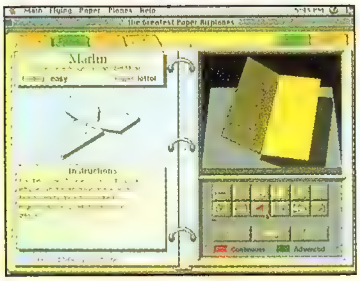
— Steven Kent

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$20 (estimated)
Mindscape
(800) 234-3088
(415) 897-9900

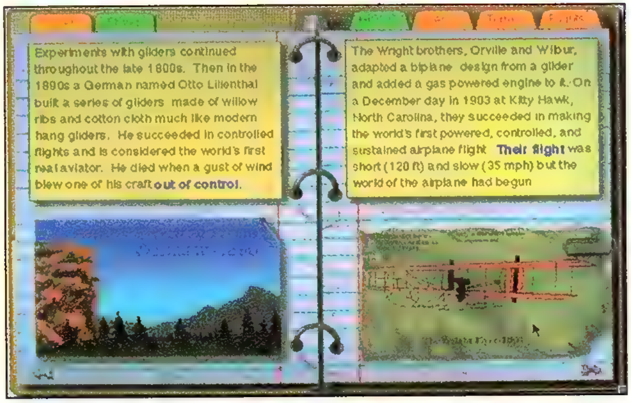
PROS
Wide variety of pulp plane designs

CONS
Some require a Ph.D. in origami

RATING ● ● ●


Main Flying Paper Planes Help
The Greatest Paper Airplanes
Marlin
easy
Instructions
Continuous
Advanced

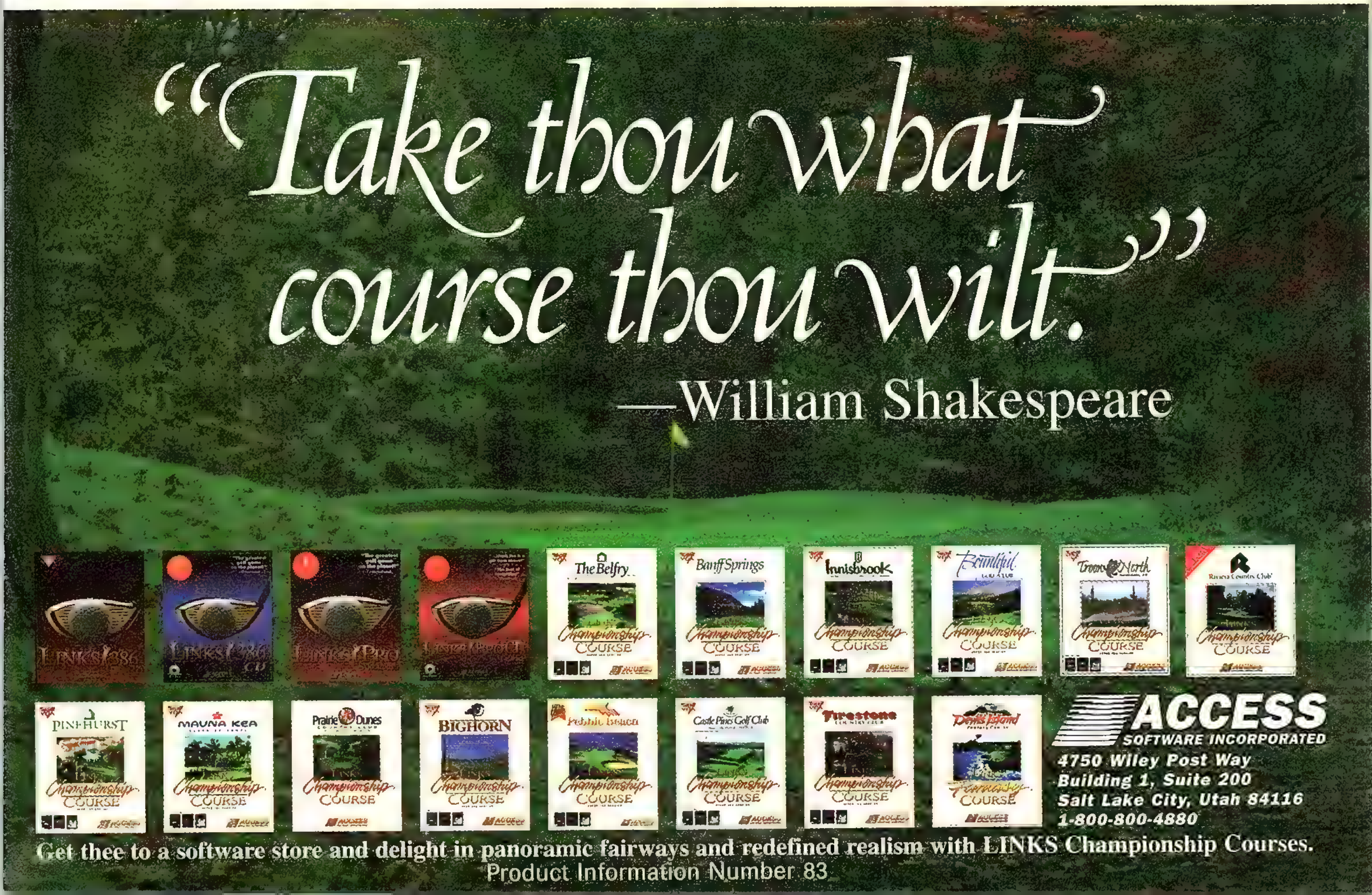
There are 50 different plane designs included on this title, such as the Marlin.



Experiments with gliders continued throughout the late 1800s. Then in the 1890s a German named Otto Lilienthal built a series of gliders made of willow ribs and cotton cloth much like modern hang gliders. He succeeded in controlled flights and is considered the world's first real aviator. He died when a gust of wind blew one of his craft **out of control**.

The Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, adapted a biplane design from a glider and added a gas powered engine to it. On a December day in 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, they succeeded in making the world's first powered, controlled, and sustained airplane flight **Their flight** was short (120 ft) and slow (35 mph) but the world of the airplane had begun

Greatest Paper Airplanes **also features a brief history of flight.**


"Take thou what course thou wilt."
—William Shakespeare

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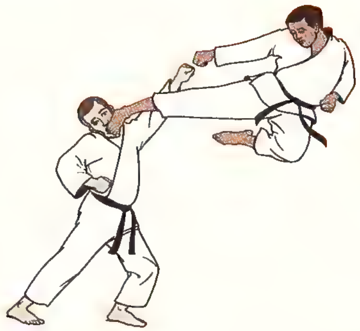
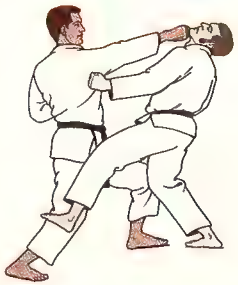
Product Information Number 83

STANDARD GUIDE FOR
CHOKING VICTIMS

YOUR VICTIM IS NOT CHOKING YET.
YOU MUST ACT FAST. EVERY SECOND COUNTS.



STEP 1 To initiate choking, tilt victim's head back using heel of foot. Proceed to lodge foot in victim's mouth, removing any excess teeth, as they may impair steps 2, 3, and 4.



STEP 2 Insert fist into mouth and probe for bronchial tubes. When found, grab tightly and pull out through nose.

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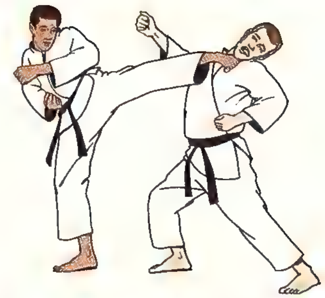
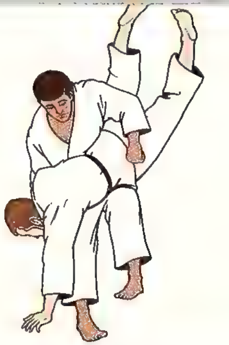
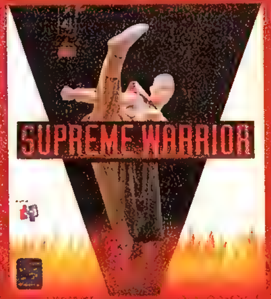


STEP 3 If no gagging sounds can be heard, administer 4 sharp blows to victim's larynx with heel of foot. Note: A purplish color on victim's face is desired as it indicates that choking is not entirely due to foot odor.



STEP 4 If victim is still not choking, turn upside down and shake vigorously until spleen is lodged in throat.

IF VICTIM DOES NOT BEGIN TO CHOKE REPEAT THIS 4-STEP SEQUENCE. DO NOT GIVE UP.



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SUPREME WARRIOR

MS-DOS, WINDOWS 95, MACINTOSH CD-ROM 1-800-332-0032 web site: http://www.digipix.com e-mail: digipix@digipix.com

If you think this poster is even remotely serious maybe you should contact one of those daytime talk shows and sign up for the episode "Incredibly gullible people and the mates who sponge off them."

Product Information Number 114

How the Leopard Got His Spots

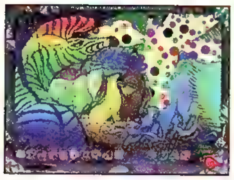
Rich interpretation of the Kipling classic

WINDOWS
$34.95
Microsoft
(800) 426-9400
(206) 882-8080
Ages 6 to 10

PROS
Rich illustrations, enticing narration, fun features, easy interface

CONS
Incongruous, slightly irritating cartoon host character

RATING ●●●●



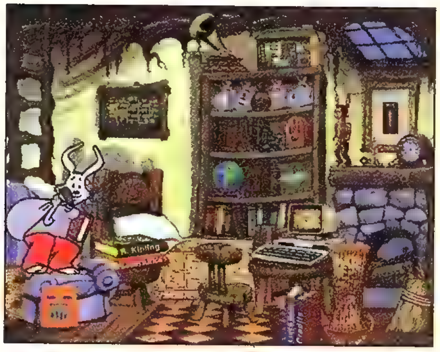
Changing your skin can be even more fun if your choices include polka-dots and spaghetti.

The release of Microsoft Home's *How the Leopard Got His Spots* couldn't have been better timed. A new generation of kids has just been introduced to the work of Rudyard Kipling through the live-action movie version of *The Jungle Book*, while *The Lion King* has made Africa a place of fascination for them. This interactive CD-ROM, based on a Kipling story set in South Africa, will tickle them in both places.

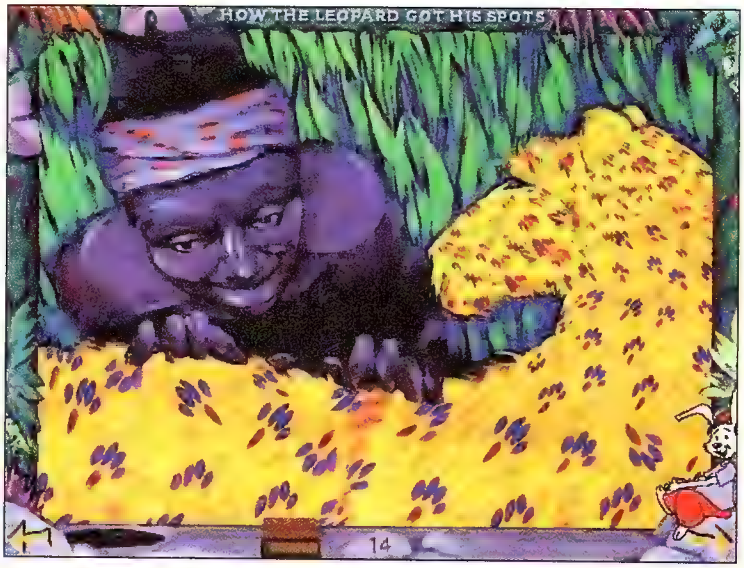
This story was first published in 1902 in a collection called *Just So Stories*, five years before Kipling won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Written for Kipling's daughter Josephine, it was intended to give a humorous explanation for the adage "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" In this story the Ethiopian and the leopard are hunting partners who can't get their breakfasts unless they figure out some tricks of camouflage.

Such a story is a treasure for an illustrator: Lori Lohstoeter's more than 200 paintings glow with deep, jewel-like colors. The landscapes are lush, the perspectives interestingly varied, and the animal figures strong and iconic, especially the zebras and giraffes.

You can proceed straight through the sequence of illustrations, listening to the warm, mellifluous narration by actor Danny Glover, or you can open a storybook. Click the highlighted words and you'll hear the pronunciation and get some explanatory material in the form of a photograph, a video, an animation, or a talking Victrola that utters definitions. The background music for the disc was produced by the South African a cappella group Ladysmith Black Mambazo.



Each time you go to the rabbit hole, you'll find P. J. Rabbit doing something different. From here, you can get to anywhere else in the program.



On one of the text's surprise-filled Play Pages, the Ethiopian, now a "nice working blackish-brownish color, with a little purple in it and a touch of slaty-blue," adds spots to his friend's fur.

At the end of each of the 15 chapters is a Play Page packed with hidden sights and sounds for children to find using the mouse. There are also four built-in games: *mancala*, an ancient African board game similar to backgammon; a texture-selection game that lets kids remake a picture in plaids, rainbows, and fractals; a set of jigsaw puzzles; and a musical matching game.

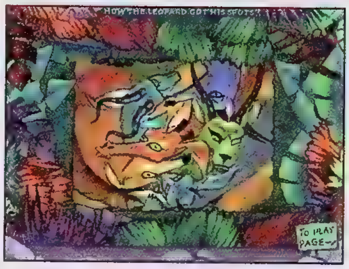
Cartoon figure P. J. Rabbit serves as the master of ceremonies and provides general guidance and instructions for the games. Although a bit goofy, he's friendly and tolerable. He'll be showing up in subsequent Microsoft adaptations of children's classics.

The interface is reasonably simple. Click on the rock at the bottom of each text page to call up the Hop-to Screen, which allows you to move to any chapter. (You can't, however, hop to any page.) You can also get around via the rabbit hole. Here you'll find direct access to the games, passageways to other parts of the disk, a collection of South African artifacts, and another hidden bunch of animated surprises. There are also several short multimedia books in which kids can find out some interesting facts about Kipling, South African geography and history, *mancala*, and the illustrator.

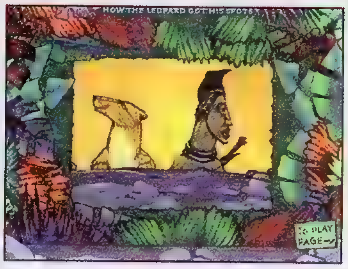
For a child, the experience of playing with a CD-ROM version of a story is not a substitute for the experience of hearing the story read aloud by a parent or a grown-up friend. So once your Best Beloved has enjoyed *How the Leopard Got His Spots*, make sure that he or she has a chance to enjoy it the old-fashioned way as well—even if you'll never sound as good as Danny Glover.

—Janet Podell

THE ORIGINS OF STEALTH



Zebras, giraffes, elands, and hartebeests depart from the High Veldt for the shadowy forest, where they discover how to become invisible...



...leaving the confused hunting partners with nothing to eat but rats, beetles, and rock rabbits.

See it on the Disc!

My Make Believe Castle

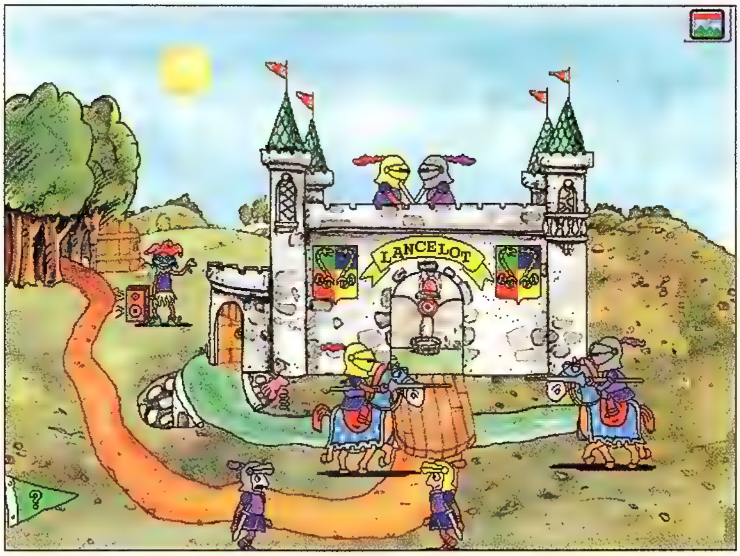
A breakthrough in children's early learning software

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$49.95
Logo Computer Systems
(800) 321-5646
(514) 331-7090
Ages 4 to 7

PROS
Puts kids in total control of the action

CONS
Looping soundtracks get old fast

RATING ●●●●●



The speaker next to the court jester prompts him to stop and tell a joke: "What does it mean when your nose runs and your feet smell? You're upside down!"

I'm always hesitant to describe a product as a breakthrough (overzealous marketing types have severely diluted the term's meaning), but I can think of no better one-word description for *My Make Believe Castle*.

Concerned parents would never think of parking their kids in front of a television. But how many hours do we let them sit in front of a computer using software that has them doing little more than pointing and clicking?

You won't find any such passivity here. Kids have almost total control over what happens on the screen. If a character walks across the castle's parapet, it's because the child programmed it to walk across the parapet. If two knights engage in a mock battle, it's because the child directed them to.

Don't worry, your four- to seven-year-old won't have to become a script writer or a programmer to use this program; in fact, they don't even have to know how to read. The only skills they'll need are their imagination and the ability to point, click, and drag the mouse.

Playing with *My Make Believe Castle* is like playing with wind-up toys: The fun comes not from having a story read aloud or having a scene unfold as they sit and watch, but from the roles and actions that they assign to these toys.

Kids cast the scene using characters selected from a picture-based menu. Left to their own devices, these knights, dragons, wizards, and such will simply walk across the scene (some of them can be reused up to five times). The fun begins when you place action icons in their paths. An elbow-shaped icon, for example, causes characters to change direction; one depicting a spring-powered foot causes them to jump; another causes them to do a somersault.

Place the speaker icon in their path, and they'll speak one of three phrases. The good knight, for example, might say, "Never fear! Your knight is here!" What's even better is that kids can use the microphone tool to record their own voice and assign it to a character. I would have appreciated a more varied soundtrack, however. Fortunately, the music can be turned off.

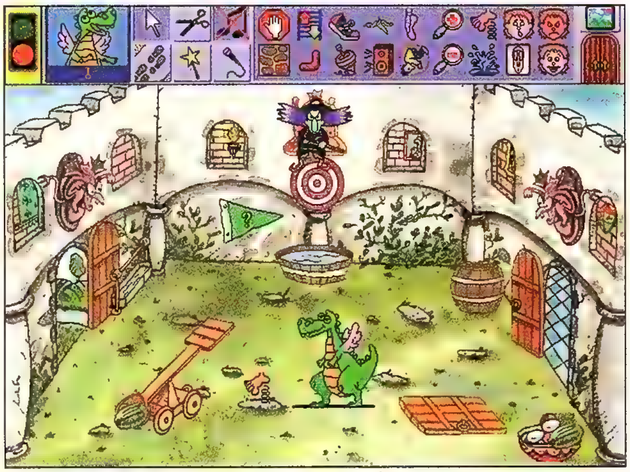
Using the happy- and angry-face icons, kids can even control a character's emotions. Put an angry-face icon in the path of a knight and he grimaces, his face turns bright red, and steam shoots out of his ears.

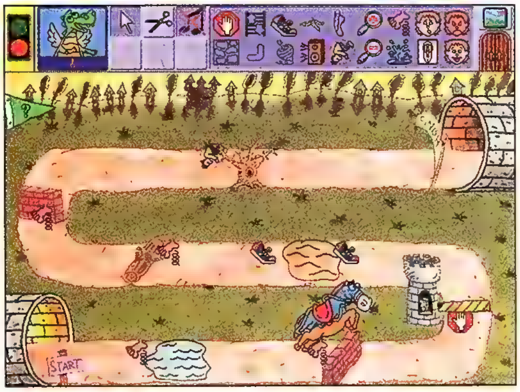
By helping characters navigate obstacles such as castle walls or streams, kids develop problem-solving skills. Place a ladder against the wall to help them climb over it, for example; or use stones to build a bridge, so they don't fall in the water. In another sequence, they'll learn elementary concepts of weight, angle, and distance by operating a catapult to hurl fruit at a bull's-eye.

The program's excellent manual goes far beyond simply documenting how the software works. It also points out how you can help your child develop important skills, on and off the computer.

The quality of the animation in *My Make Believe Castle* isn't as sophisticated as you'll find in some programs, but I'll happily accept the trade-off for its unique ability to empower kids to be creative.

— Michael Brown


In this courtyard scene, Nicky will jump on the catapult when he steps on the spring, causing the watermelon to hit the bull's-eye, which drops the witch into the water.



In this problem-solving activity, kids must use the appropriate action icons to help the character negotiate the maze.

Art Explorer

Studio-on-a-disc for budding artists

MAC
$49.99
Adobe Systems
(800) 888-6293
(408) 655-5413
Ages 8 to adult

PROS
Extensive clip-art library, wide assortment of graphics tools

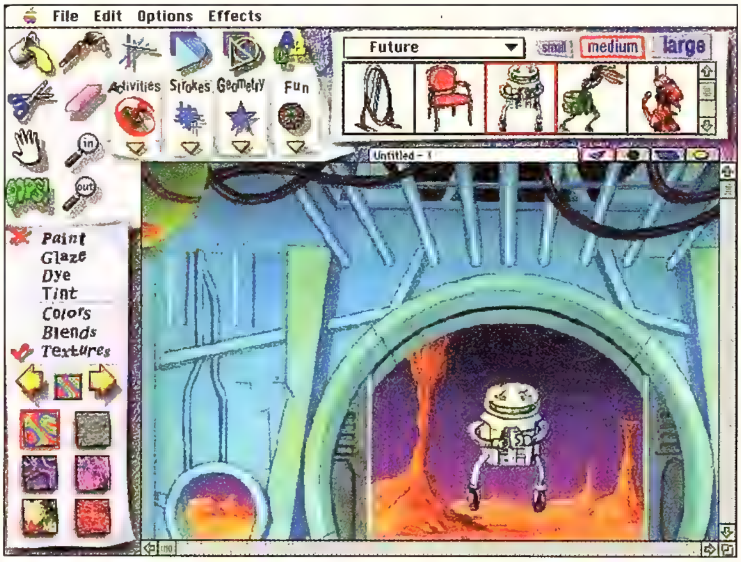
CONS
Not significantly easier or cooler than a grown-up's paint program

RATING ● ● ●

Kids with an urge to create masterpieces on the Mac can choose from a wide selection of art-making programs. Broderbund's *KidPix*, with its wacky sounds and wild tools, holds the low end. Fractal Design's *Dabbler* is a natural-media painting tool for amateurs of any age. Now Adobe Systems, the 900-pound gorilla of graphics software developers, has released *Art Explorer*, a CD-ROM-based kids' paint program that, unfortunately, doesn't add much to the genre.

Art Explorer contains both a paint application and a 2,000-image clip-art library, including lots of stuff that adults think kids will like. Once past the splash screen (which is accompanied by really loud music that you can't stifle from within the program), you'll find a kid-friendly set of tool icons. These follow the traditional layout that paint programs have used since MacPaint, with most tools and paints down the left side of the screen.

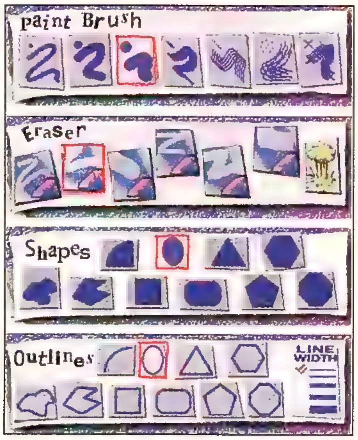
Kids who have seen other paint programs will immediately recognize the paint can (for filling areas), the brush, the straight-line tool, shape tools, the magnifying glass, the text tool, and scissors for selecting areas and moving them around. *Dabbler*-style, drop-down icon menus hold special tools for placing stamps and finger painting; for messing around with splotches, sprays, and drips; for creating regular polygons; and for doing unclassifiable stuff like making kaleidoscopes. Sorry, there are no tools that work like chalk, charcoal, watercolors, or other standard art media.



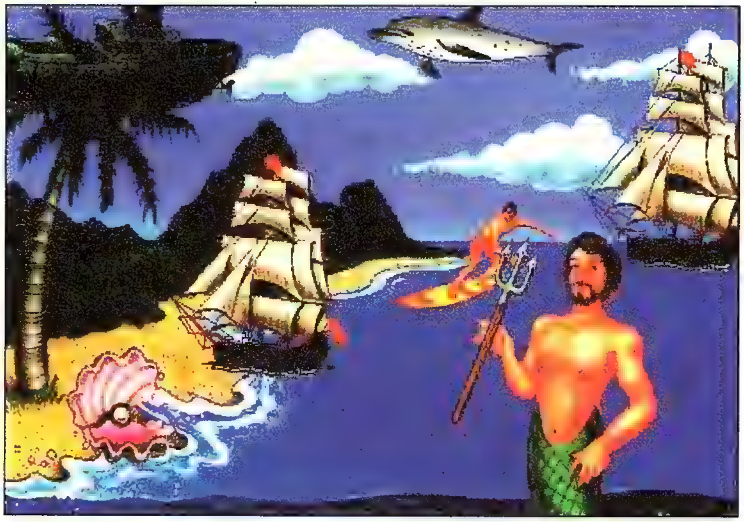
Art Explorer **takes the MacPaint interface and updates it for kids age eight and older.**

Below the tools are the color, blend, and texture palettes. There are a couple of new wrinkles here: Art Explorer lets you paint with realistic textures and apply them in glazes and tints.

Most kids will gravitate immediately to the Explore palette of clip art. There are eight "worlds" to explore, each with several background scenes and scores of clip images, all hand-drawn. The Aqua world, for example, includes 4 ocean backgrounds and about 100 Stamp Itz, as the clips are called. You get subs, ships, fish, whales, mermaids, surfers, and various parts that can be combined in infinite ways. For kids who prefer to color pictures in, some art is offered in outline only.



Each tool has a number of variations.



The clips are colorful and go well with one another—plus they come in three sizes.

Art Explorer has been in development for a couple of years now, but there's still some tweaking to do. The stamp tool ought to be part of the standard tool palette, not stuck in a drop-down menu. You can't turn off the little sound effects that go with each tool—even kids get tired of them after a while—without messing with your Mac's sound control panel. Also, *Art Explorer* is optimized for printing to QuickDraw printers such as Apple's StyleWriter series. Printing to a PostScript laser printer, for example, takes a long time.

And consider this: Do kids really need their own art program? Cute sounds aside, a grown-up's paint program works just as well for most children and offers more graphics power. True, they won't get the clip art, but maybe they should be drawing those mermaids and submarines themselves—that would be *real* art exploration.

—Steven Anzovin

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Product Information Number 177

Colors, Shapes, & Size with Poldy the Scarecrow

Nothing to crow about

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$29.95
StarPress
(800) 782-7944
(415) 778-3100
Ages 3 to 6

PROS
Plenty of activities and colorful characters

CONS
Requires little cognitive input

RATING ● ● ●

Poldy the Scarecrow makes the transition from a children's educational book to an edutainment CD-ROM remarkably intact. Which is, unfortunately, a pity. The CD-ROM isn't bad, but it just doesn't take full advantage of the venue.

In this installment, Poldy explores the concepts of colors, shapes, and sizes with the help of three bird friends. These three avian allies actually fulfill Poldy's life-long dream of learning to fly. Once Poldy is air worthy, they set out on three different learning adventures.

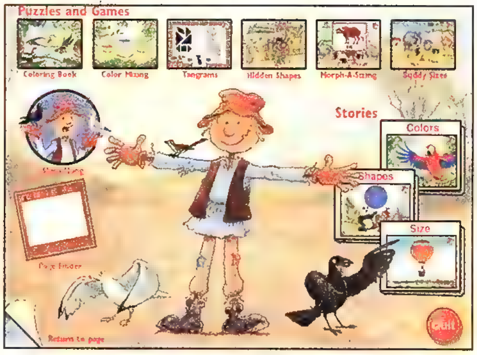
At any time, you can get to Poldy's main menu by clicking on his picture in the upper-right corner of the screen. Within this main menu you can go to any of the stories or to any page in a story.

In addition, there are six puzzles and/or games that relate to each of the three stories.

And then there is the sing along section. Here, your child can listen to three songs detailing the three "adventures in learning." As far as the songs go, *Poldy* might as well be called "Moldy." All the songs are nauseatingly reminiscent of 60s pop music in the Dionne Warwick style. The background audio, on the other hand, is very well executed for each of the stories.

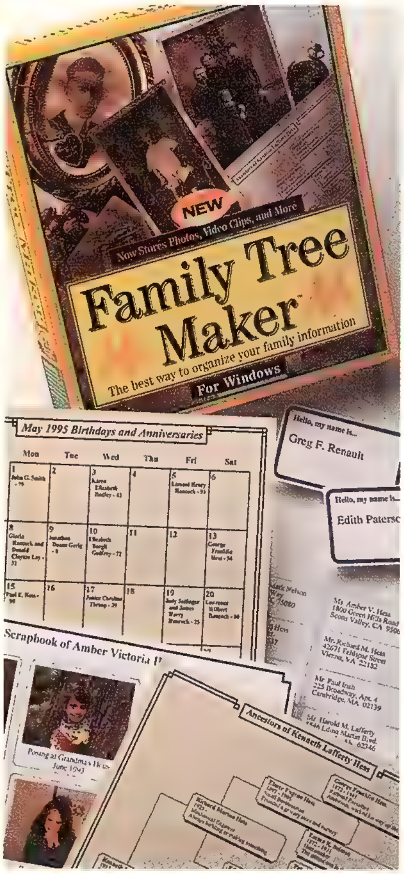
Josh, my stalwart reviewer's helper, seemed to like the stories and even the sing along. But then again, he hates my shower rendition of "Mony, Mony," so how much musical taste can he possibly possess at the tender age of five?

—*J. Daniel Jones*


Puzzles and Games
Coloring Book
Color Mixing
Tangrams
Hidden Shapes
Morph-A-Sizing
Suddy Sizes
Stories
Colors
Shapes
Size
Page Finder
Return to page
Quit

***Poldy*'s main screen makes it easy to access anything you want to explore.**

As Poldy will tell you, landing is the hard part of flying.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Family Tree Maker
The best way to organize your family information
For Windows
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Product Information Number 94

Pantsylvania

Salvador Dali on Sesame Street

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
Reviewed on Windows
$49.95
Headbone Interactive
(Distributed by Sega)
(800) 267-4709
(206) 323-0073
Ages 4 and up

PROS
Engaging, creative, unpredictable, and funny

CONS
Sometimes it's a bit too surreal

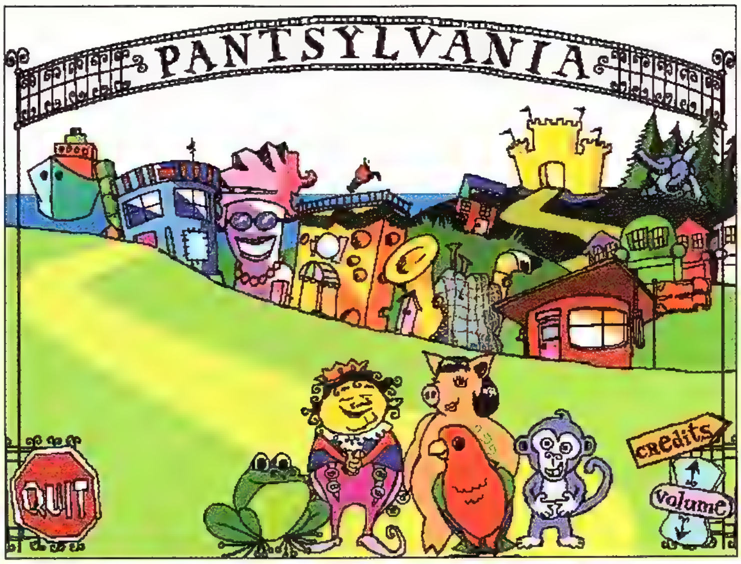
RATING ● ● ● ● ◐

Until last week, my two-year-old daughter's interest in multimedia has been to use CD-ROMs as Frisbees. Then I showed her *Pantsylvania.*

I don't mean to say she's become an instant mouse potato, but the disc held her interest long enough to convince me that it's a winner. I'll vote for any product that can keep a two-year-old in one place for more than five minutes.

For me, *Pantsylvania*'s chief attraction is its unpredictability. It's multimedia Magritte: lots of quirky visuals and plenty of oddball humor. As surreal as the disc is, it's cheerful and friendly.

Five tour guides usher kids through the 10 different *Pantsylvania* locales. Each locale has a different theme, ranging from food to transportation to music. Subjects taught include shapes, animals, numbers and the alphabet. Headbone succeeds marvelously in making these potentially dry topics interesting. The alphabet, for instance, is taught backward. Why not teach a child the Z-Y-Xs?

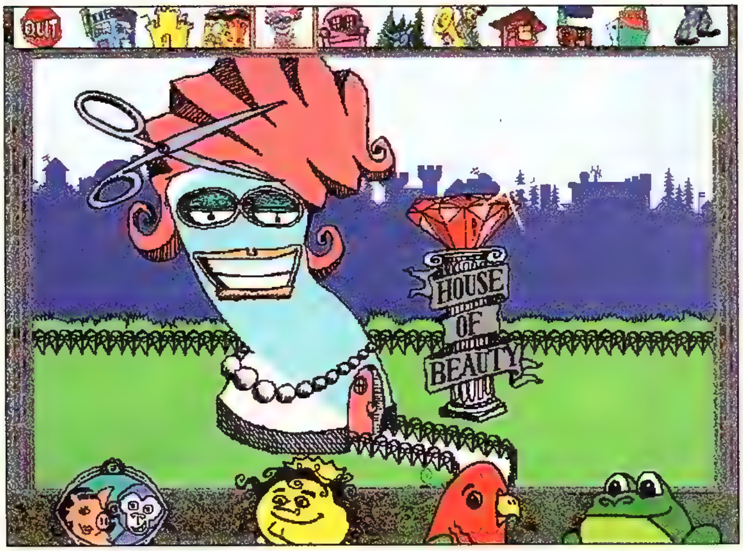


Kingamajig, Velma and the gang are ready to escort your kids through *Pantsylvania*.

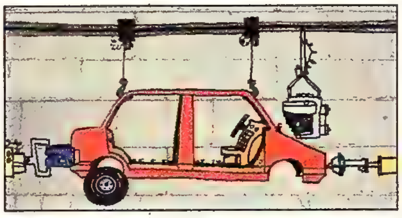
Each guide has a specific function. Kingamajig, the disc's de facto host, leads kids in a different song for each destination. A lyric sheet is thoughtfully included in the package, so you and your children can sing along with such lyrics as, "I love it when I munch, I love it when I crunch. Broccoli for breakfast and a pretzel pie for lunch. My favorite thing to eat is food!"

Svelte Velma the Swine provides children with useful facts. Enter the Fancy Pants Factory, for example, and she'll explain the concept of horsepower. It's an interesting lesson, made all the more interesting by the fact that a lipstick-wearing pig is illustrating the workings of an internal combustion engine.

If that isn't surreal enough for you, wait 'til Bunji the Frog invites your kids into his active-learning environments. They'll do more than trigger animations or reveal hidden objects; they'll find plenty of room for manipulation, for causing interaction between objects, and for simple play. The limitless freedom in these areas is made even more attractive by the activities in which kids can participate. At Kingamajig's Castle, for example, they can plant bolts and nuts in the ground, water them, and grow toasters. In Chez Cheese, a creative young chef can whip up a blueberry-ketchup cake.

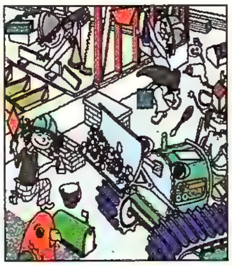


The House of Beauty is one of *Pantsylvania*'s better tourist attractions.



Velma gives an impromptu lecture in auto mechanics.

You and your kids will also encounter some more mundane material. Clyde the Parrot guides you through hidden-object games, and Monkie-Sue sets off animation segments. Although not as engaging as the other characters, they still offer a chance to enjoy the disc's goofy and surprise-filled content.



Clyde teaches kids the difference between a square and a trapezoid.

Maybe the fact that I loved this disc says more about me than about the disc, but creativity like this ought to be commended. In a world of drab learning programs and insultingly stupid games, it's a pleasure to see something this eccentric. *Pantsylvania* succeeds because it goes beyond the basics; the program also teaches children how to become self-reliant, how to teach themselves.

— Peter Lefevre

Math Ace Grand Prix

Good news for the mathematically challenged

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$39.95
Sanctuary Woods
(800) 943-3664
(415) 286-6000
Ages 7 to 14

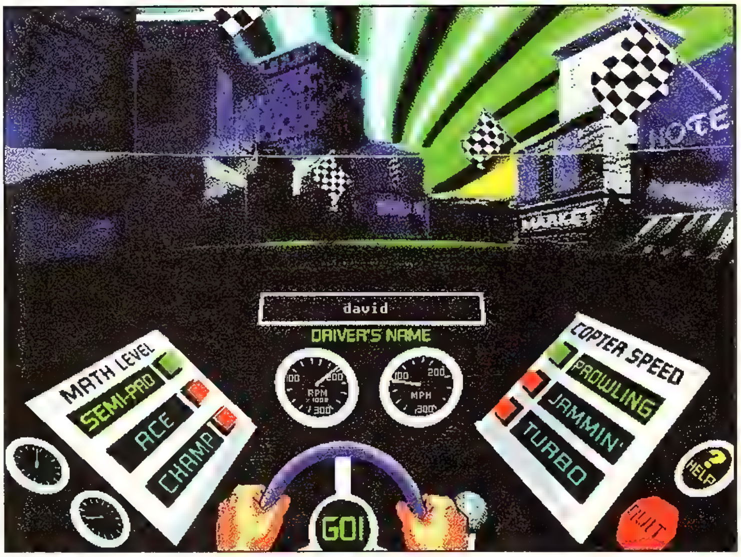
PROS
Colorful 3D graphics combine with imaginative games and helpful, interactive text

CONS
Some animation plays unevenly; may conflict with some common utility programs

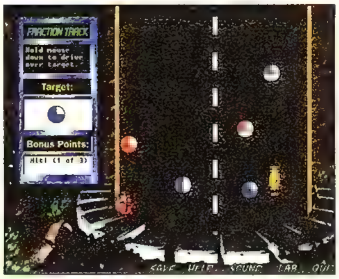
RATING ● ● ● ●

As any parent can tell you, school-age kids are often less than enthusiastic when it comes to studying math. With its cerebral, abstract nature, math just doesn't generate much excitement. So if your kids are having trouble with math and you can't seem to kick-start the learning process, Sanctuary Woods offers an excellent solution—*Math Ace Grand Prix*.

Math Ace is an interactive arcade-like game built around a racetrack metaphor. As the program opens, you find yourself in the cockpit of a race car where you choose one of three math levels: Semipro, for ages 8 to 11; Ace, for ages 10 to 14; and Champ, for ages 15 to 18. Clicking the Go button opens the main game board.



***Math Ace Grand Prix* begins with a view from inside a race car, where you select a game level and 'Copter speed.**



Hold mouse down to drive over target.

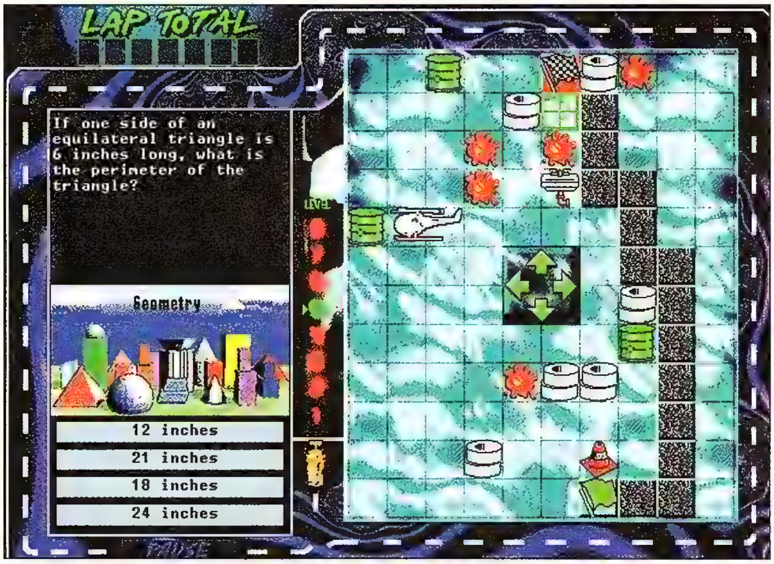
Hit! (1 of 3)

In Fraction Track, you must outmaneuver your opponent and run over the target that corresponds to the fraction shown on the left.

The goal is to build a road from the green start flag to the checkered finish flag by laying down colored squares two at a time in any direction. You "earn" these sections of track by correctly answering math problems that appear to the left of the roadway. To make sure you don't dawdle too much, you must also contend with an evil helicopter ("the 'Copter") that flies around randomly, dropping oil splats and other debris to block your path. You can choose one of three 'Copter speeds for maneuvering around these obstacles.

There are also several hidden math challenges that pop up unexpectedly, forcing you to confront the 'Copter in an extra test of your math skills. These ancillary games cover important math concepts not fully covered in the main game. They include: Paint Ball—a probability game; Angle Cannon—a shooting game based on angles; Fraction Track—a game that helps with recognition of fractions; and Function Shoot—a game used for developing skills for solving linear equations.

All told, *Math Ace* covers an impressive range, drawing from more than 3,000 questions spanning 70 topics. The concepts that are covered include addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, probability, and decimals. The more advanced levels include algebra, geometry, and graphs. Beginning students can even learn about telling time and using a calculator.



If one side of an equilateral triangle is 6 inches long, what is the perimeter of the triangle?

12 inches
21 inches
18 inches
24 inches

In *Math Ace*, you build a racetrack from flag to flag by solving problems as the 'Copter tries to block your path.

You'll also find a reference section that includes a wealth of useful information such as definitions, conversion tables, algebraic problem-solving tips, translation of numbers (into French, Japanese, and Spanish), and much more.

Math Ace Grand Prix packs a lot of teaching material onto a single disc. The colorful 3D artwork (which is a little dark for my taste), the lively music, sound effects, narration, and creative blend of activities will appeal to a wide range of young people.

Overall the games worked fine, but there were some problems. Fraction Track, for example, was awkward and occasionally quit unexpectedly in the middle of a game.

Additionally, I would have liked a more complete owner's manual than the nine-page mini-pamphlet that comes with the disc. On the flip side, however, the numerous help screens are easy to read and well-written.

Clearly, Sanctuary Woods put a lot of thought into *Math Ace Grand Prix*. Although it may not replace a good math teacher, it surely makes a nice adjunct to the learning process. And covering the math spectrum as it does from simple addition to algebra, it should retain its usefulness as your child progresses through school.

— David M. Rubin

Multicultural Tales

A good reason to revisit your VCR

MAC
$49.95
Queue
(800) 232-2224
(203) 335-0906

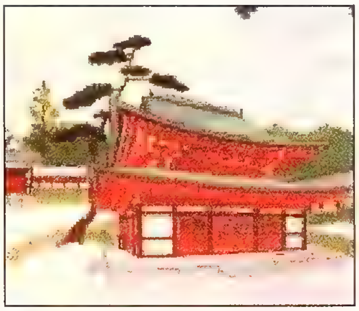
PROS
Fabulous illustrations; well-told stories

CONS
Light multimedia content; better left as a video

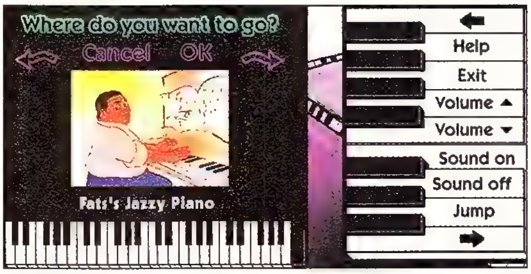
RATING ● ●

I love animated films as much as the next guy. However, I have a slight problem with animated films that have been butchered onto a disc and sold as a multimedia experience. *Multicultural Tales*, three excellent animated films that have been bundled up and released as a CD-ROM, would have been better left in their original format.

The animation is of the highest quality, featuring vibrant colors, expressive characters, and touching stories. But the animation doesn't work nearly as well on this disc as it would on a VCR or more carefully executed disc. The images are blurred and jerky, transitions from scene to scene are slow and awkward. Worst of all, the soundtrack, the images, and the printed text are not in sync. What begins as a quaint animated short starts to resemble a poorly dubbed kung-fu movie.



Andersen's ***The Nightingale***, retold on CD-ROM.



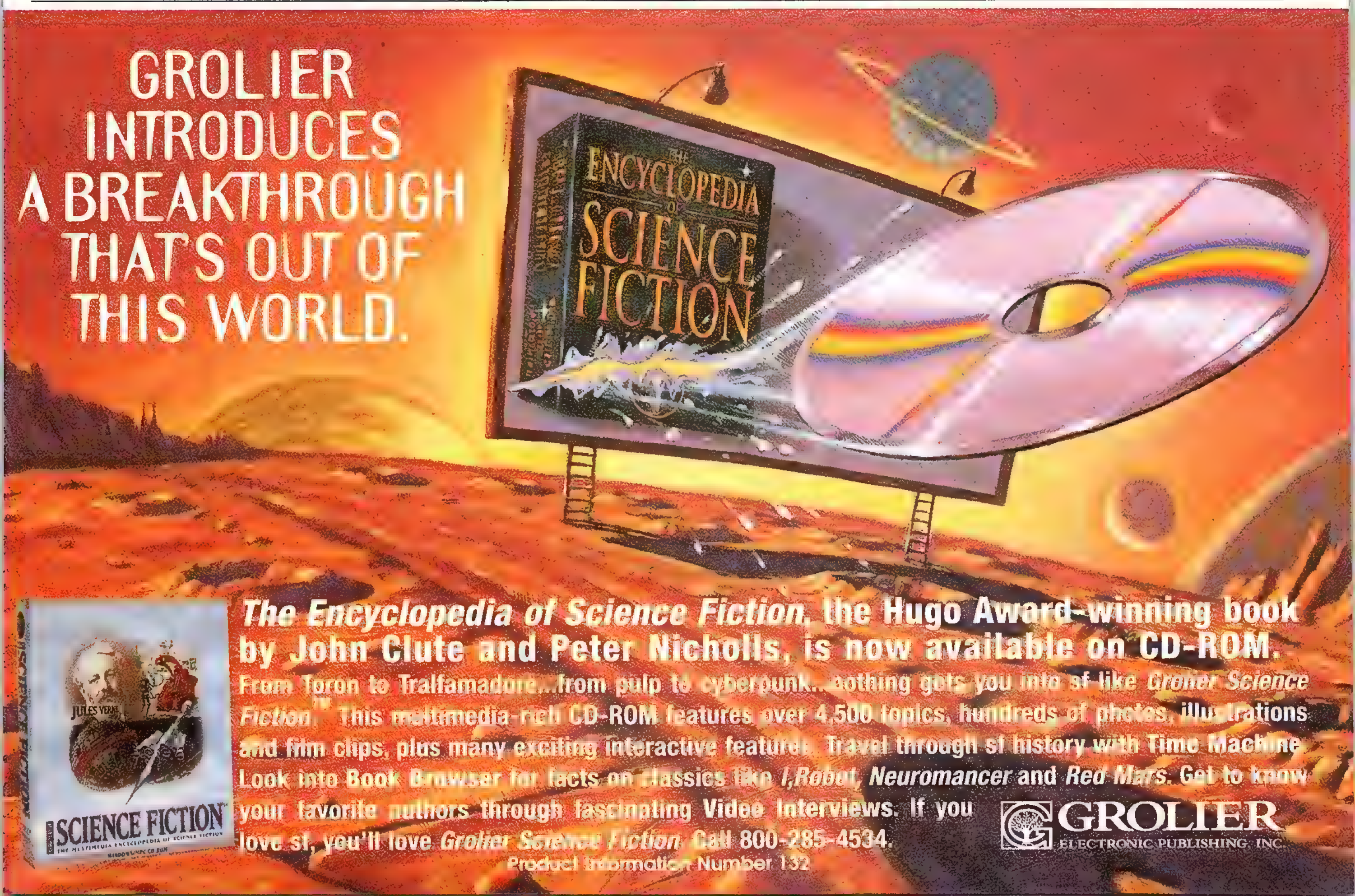
Fats Waller's self-portraits are unflinching in their honesty.

Other added attractions remind the user that he or she is having a multimedia experience. The disc includes a quiz, in case you feel like taking an exam on the films. Clicking on the help button calls forth Notey, an animated helper who sounds like Carlton the Doorman from the old *Rhoda* television series.

Also tacked on the disc is something called "The Piano Game," which, not surprisingly, is neither a piano nor a game.

This is not really a multimedia title. It's three animated shorts shoveled onto a disc with a few quick multimedia tricks tossed in for good measure. Not to disparage the films, they were just better off in their original format.

— Peter Lefevre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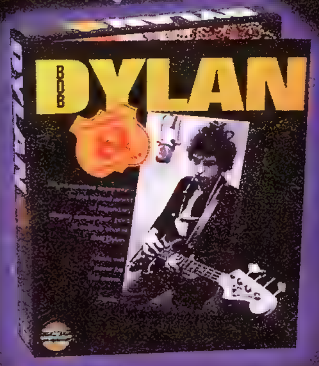

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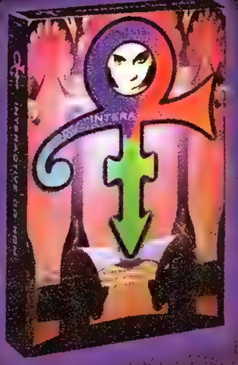

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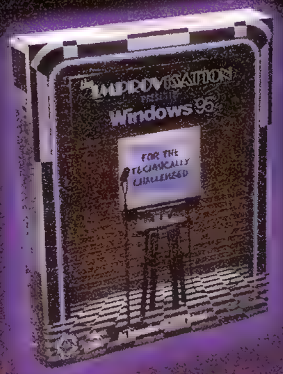

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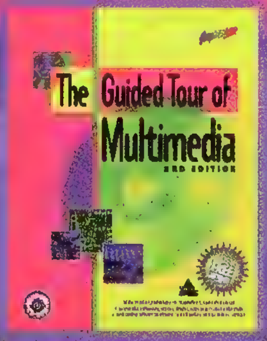

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Graphix Zone

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Marty and the Trouble with Cheese

Look Ma, no hands!

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$34.95
Maxis
(800) 526-2947
(510) 933-5630
Ages 2 to 5

PROS
Voice-activated interactivity; characters that mimic your child are new, fun, and totally cool

CONS
Educational objectives, if any, are unclear

RATING ● ● ● ●

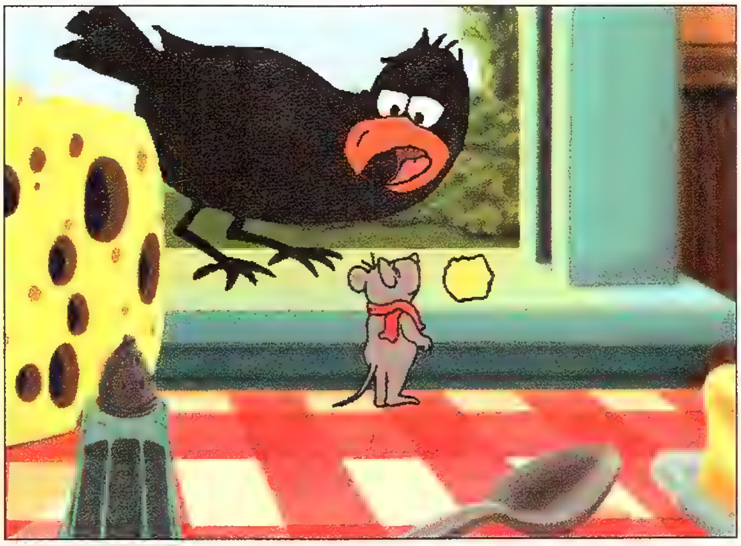
Editor's note:
This program requires that your computer have a microphone and a sound card or internal audio system capable of recording audio.

That's right—no hands, because kids don't need a mouse or a keyboard to use this voice-activated storybook about an endearing mouse named Marty. As one 5-year-old explained it to her little brother, "It's a talking game. You don't have to push any buttons or anything!"

The story begins a bit slowly, with an overly detailed introduction of Marty's "mousehold." The fun begins when Marty's mother asks for your help in getting Marty out of bed. Speak Marty's name into the microphone and he'll stir, but you'll have to repeat his name several times before he'll finally sit up and say, "All right already! I'm up!" That's when you realize this program is something special.

Marty's mother asks him to fetch a piece of cheese for dinner, but like most kids, Marty becomes distracted. When he happens upon a huge wedge of Swiss cheese, he decides to play a game of peekaboo inside it. Each time you call Marty's name, he'll stick his head out of a random hole in the cheese.

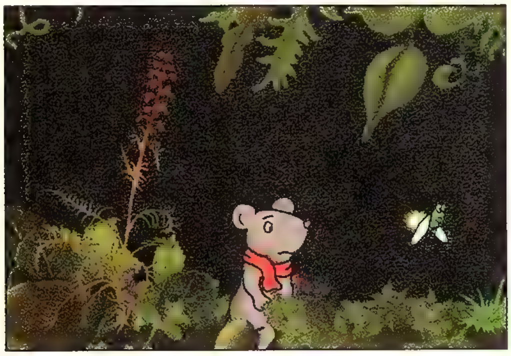
When my 10-year-old called the mouse by an irreverent nickname that rhymes with Marty, Marty quickly popped into view, stuck out his tongue, and produced raspberry sound effects. This delighted my son, who laughed out loud, causing Marty to pop out of another hole in the cheese with a teasing song.


The silly mimicking crow is the most fun. Older kids and adults will talk to it, too.

Some parents may frown disconcertedly as their innocent 2-year-olds repeat Marty's teasing sounds and gestures, but they'll be won over by the time the mimicking crow makes his entrance.

"I'm talking to the computer," the crow mimicked back to me, complete with my incredulous intonation. The crow sticks around as long as you talk, whistle, whisper, sing, or laugh. As soon as you stop, the silence prompts the crow to steal Marty's cheese and fly away, with poor Marty in tow. Before long, the crow drops both Marty and the cheese into a stream and the adventure continues.

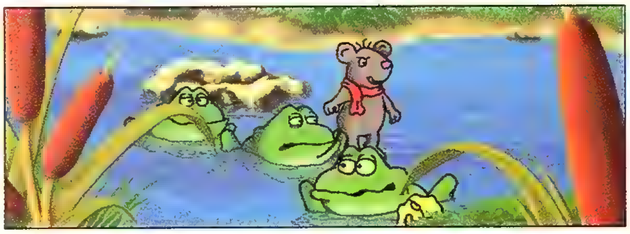
Kids will be asked to help Marty navigate the stream by making wind noises to power his raft, prompting him to hop over frogs, and more. They'll also be challenged to keep quiet as Marty sneaks past a sleeping cat.

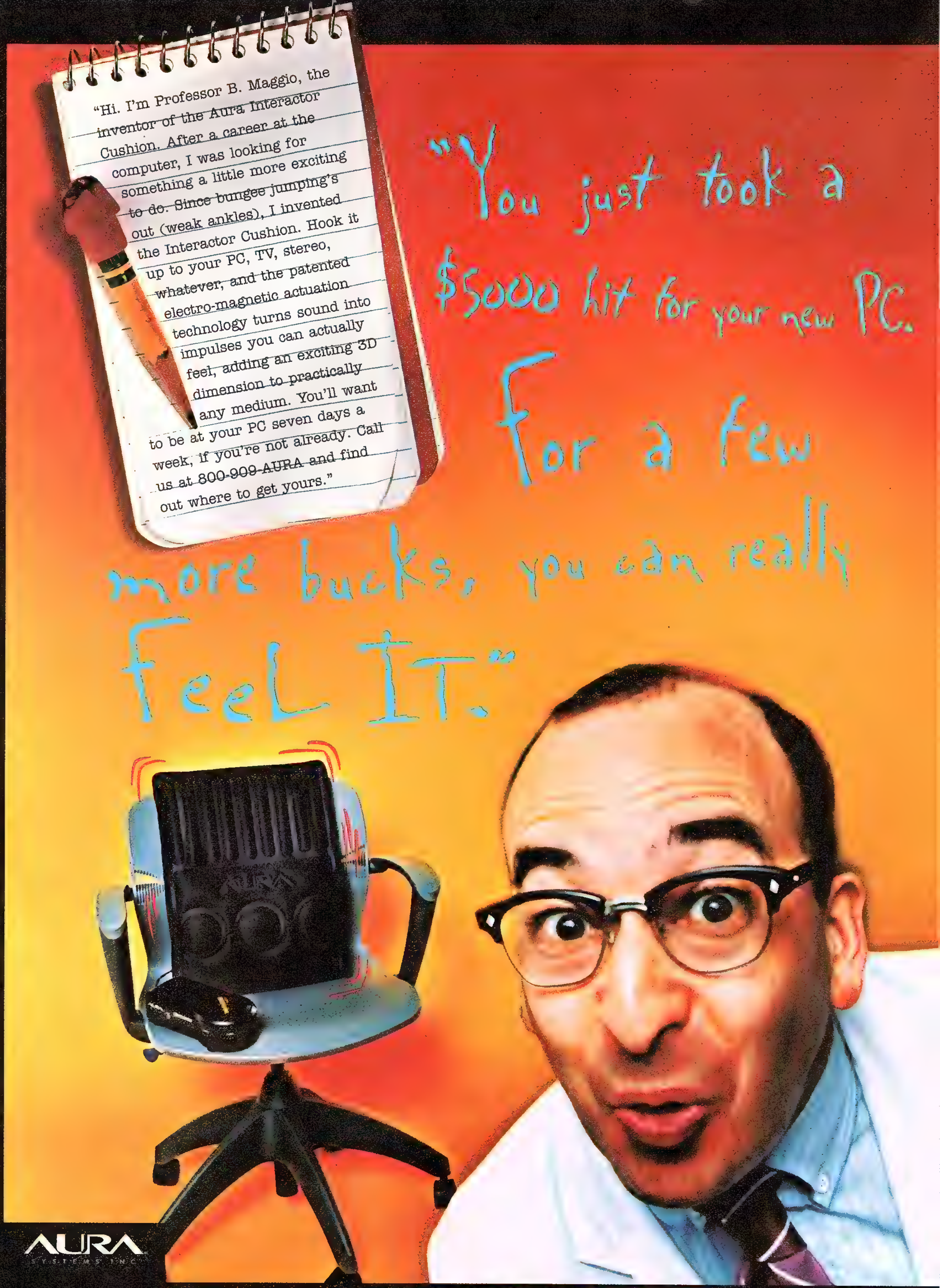

The beautifully rendered dark forest brightens magically when kids call the firefly's name.

The graphics and animation are colorful and appealing, especially the beautifully rendered dark forest, which brightens magically when kids call Marty's firefly friend to light his way. The sound effects in the stream and forest scenes are wonderful, but the background music is mildly annoying. You can adjust or mute the volume with software controls, of course; other controls let you switch between English or Spanish, turn on or off the interactive aspects of the story, and adjust the microphone's sensitivity.

This voice-activation technology is entertaining for kids and adults alike, but it raises some interesting questions. Is this a good use of technology, or is it enough for kids to just have fun? I don't think it's developmentally appropriate to restrain a toddler in a high chair in front of a responsive computer. Kids don't need a new form of technological baby-sitting; television is bad enough. On the other hand, if the child is free to come and go, and if there's an even more responsive and nurturing adult nearby, both will have fun with this software.

—Lynn Hazen


Marty leaps to shore when you tell him to hop.



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Let's Explore the Airport

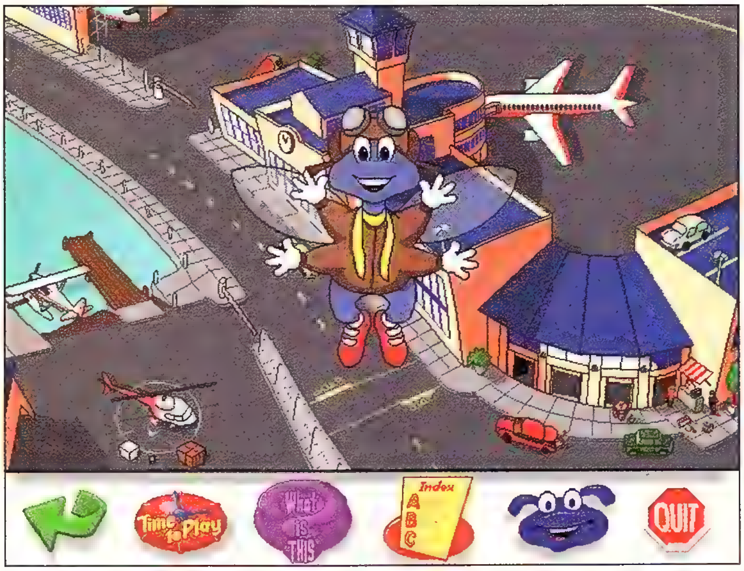
Two trips worth taking

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$29.95 each
Humongous Entertainment
and Random House
(800) 499-8386
(206) 485-1212
Ages 3 to 8

PROS
Each disc offers dozens of entertaining screens and informative pages

CONS
Non-readers will have difficulty following the text in the articles as they are read aloud

RATING ● ● ● ●



Let's Explore the Airport **and** ***Let's Explore the Farm*** **feature a friendly animated bug named Buzzy, who serves as a field trip guide.**

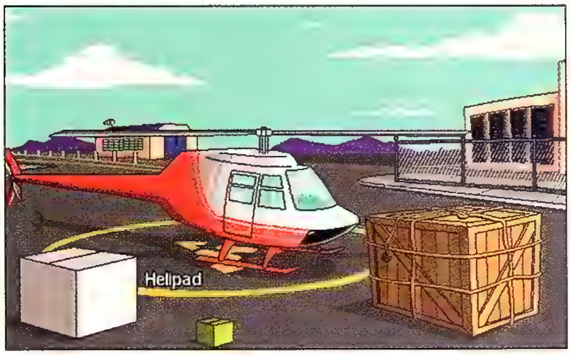
A school field trip is one of the most exciting—and educational—experiences a child can have. Humongous Entertainment's *Let's Explore* series enables kids aged 3 to 8 to take a trip without ever leaving their computers. With Buzzy the Knowledge Bug as your guide, these multimedia tours of a city airport and country farm are colorful, humorous, and entertaining.

Each field trip presents dozens of scenes for investigation (the farm has 30; the airport, 40). At the airport, you can climb aboard a single-engine plane to play with objects in the cockpit. Go into the terminal and you can interact with the people standing in line at the ticket counter and follow baggage down a conveyor belt. Proceed through airport security and you can examine an animated helicopter. Visit the farm and you can roam around the farmhouse and barn where you'll meet horses in the pasture, feed the pigs, and harvest corn from the field. You can also interact with the chickens in the chicken coop.

Every scene has several audio-visual surprises, which kick into action when you discover them with the mouse: suitcases hop, cows moo, seat belts dance, dogs bark, eggs change color, and more. These hidden treasures are easy to find because the cursor changes color as it moves around the screen.

Both programs have an identical user interface: Six large buttons provide a menu of choices at the bottom of the screen. Click on Buzzy's head and the friendly bug will appear and point out a few interesting facts about the current scene. Click on the big purple question mark at the bottom of the screen and the cursor changes into a question mark; rest the question-mark cursor on a screen object, the object's name appears, and the computer reads it aloud.

Clicking the question-mark cursor on an object takes you to an illustrated article about the object. You can read the text description, hear the text read aloud, and see a picture related to the object. Some information screens contain blue-colored text. Click on a blue word and you'll jump to that word's encyclopedia article, which provides a detailed definition. Any of these articles can be printed, although at the time of this review, Humongous technical support acknowledged problems printing to an HP DeskJet 560C and LaserJet 4M Plus.

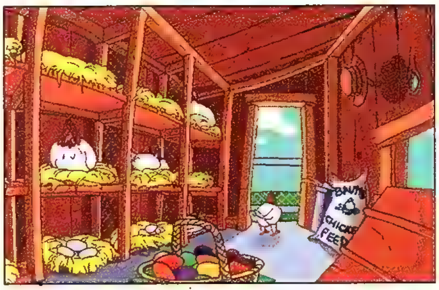


Point the question mark cursor at an object to see its name and hear it read aloud.

Frisky animations, sounds, and read-aloud information pages are not enough to guarantee that kids will enjoy a CD-ROM. That's why each *Let's Explore* disc also offers five entertaining activities. Both *Airport* and *Farm* have an online coloring book with scenes you can color using electronic paints. A trivia game asks multiple-choice questions about the spots visited on tour. Find It challenges players to locate field trip items for a treasure hunt. Other activities build spelling and matching skills or strengthen hand-eye coordination through fast-paced, arcade-like action.

City kids rarely get a chance to experience the sights and sounds of a country farm or the hustle and bustle at a local airport. With these engaging field trips, youngsters can go on lively excursions and build reading skills. Conventional printed texts pale by comparison.

— *Carol S. Holzberg*



Every field trip scene has several audio-visual hot spots that kick into action when you click on them with the mouse. In the Farm's chicken coop, for example, the eggs change color.

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Product Information Number 127

Student Writing & Research Center

Research and write about everything under the sun

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$99
The Learning Company
(800) 852-2255
(510) 792-2101
Ages 10 and up

PROS
Good writing tips; easy to use; very accessible encyclopedia

CONS
Needs more consistent indexing in help function and in topic searches

RATING ●●●●◐

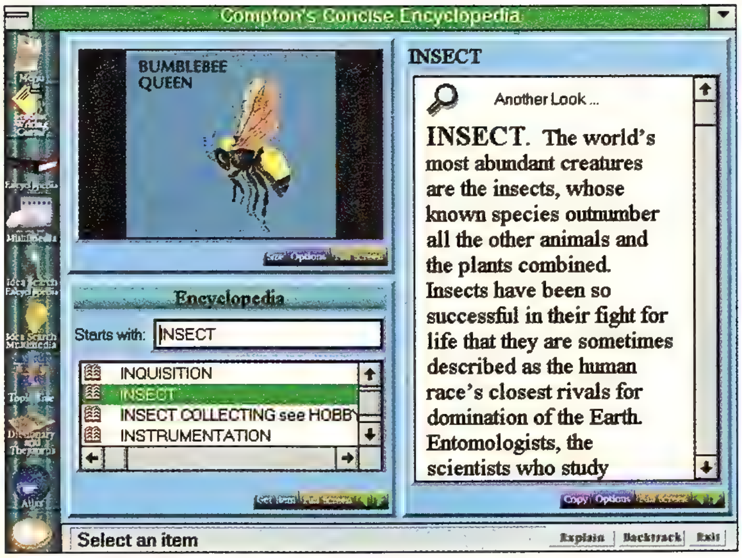
The real-world equivalent of The Learning Company's *Student Writing & Research Center* would be a word-processing and desktop publishing workstation —complete with scanner—located in a library. I've never seen this many resources available in one place before.

The program consists of two basic modules: The Student Writing Center (a word processor with templates for the kinds of documents that students do most) and a subset of *Compton's Encyclopedia* known as Compton's Concise Encyclopedia.

The word processor is somewhat uninspiring, but the rest of the program's features more than make up for it. You'll find an atlas, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and an encyclopedia containing a rich array of multimedia sounds, images, and movies to explore and excerpt from. Best of all, the writing and research domains are knitted together by a set of very concrete, instructive writing tips that should help even the most severely blocked writer.

When you're ready to create a new document, you can choose among templates for reports, newsletters, journals, letters, and signs. You can also retrieve saved documents, entering a password for all journal files. Each type of writing comes with its own custom menu offering features that are especially relevant to that form, such as special layout options for newsletters.

The Writing and Grammar Tips feature does a good job of explaining the types of documents that are appropriate for each kind of template. The report template, for instance, can be used to write essays, classroom reports, research papers, book reports, and short stories. Tips also prompt you with useful criteria for evaluating writing.


Compton's Concise Encyclopedia

BUMBLEBEE QUEEN

Encyclopedia

Starts with: INSECT

INQUISITION
INSECT
INSECT COLLECTING see HOBB
INSTRUMENTATION

INSECT

Another Look ...

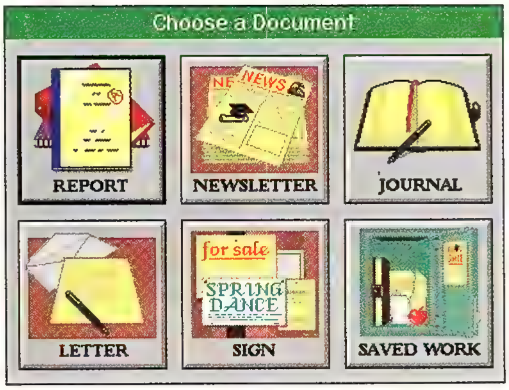
INSECT. The world's most abundant creatures are the insects, whose known species outnumber all the other animals and the plants combined. Insects have been so successful in their fight for life that they are sometimes described as the human race's closest rivals for domination of the Earth. Entomologists, the scientists who study

Select an item

The buttons on the left side of the Compton's Concise Encyclopedia window allow you to explore the program's enormous database using many different criteria.

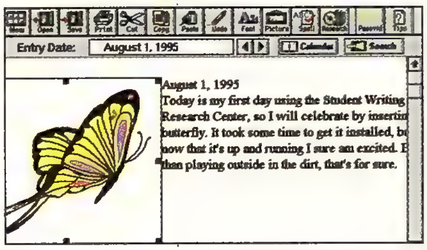
The word processor and the encyclopedia are linked by buttons on their toolbars. From any point in a document, you can easily jump to the research function with a click of the mouse. Each time you open the Encyclopedia, it displays the topics you were looking at last, like an automatic bookmark.

Let's say you're writing a report on world religions. You might begin by doing a search for the word "religion." Alternatively, you can explore the Topic Tree, which branches to show all the subtopics below each major heading, along with icons indicating the presence of articles, pictures, or additional subtopics. Or you can listen to liturgical music by different composers, or look at pictures of religious art. The research tools available in the Encyclopedia are so diverse that a young writer can easily find inspiration just browsing.



Clear illustrations show the general format for each type of document template.

Once you've decided on your approach, you can copy text or pictures into your document, take notes by positioning the Writing window next to the Encyclopedia window, or just get down to the first draft. To prevent raw plagiarism, any text that is copied from the Encyclopedia into a report is automatically annotated (e.g., "Sculpture," *Compton's Encyclopedia*). Interestingly, when you paste the same text into a newsletter, it is not annotated. (I guess we can't rely on computers to enforce journalistic ethics.)


Entry Date: August 1, 1995

August 1, 1995
Today is my first day using the Student Writing Research Center, so I will celebrate by insertin butterfly. It took some time to get it installed, b now that it's up and running I sure am excited. B than playing outside in the dirt, that's for sure.

The Journal toolbar allows you to manage all your journal entries as if they were part of a single "book."

With these tools at your disposal, you may find that your entire writing process changes. It's so easy to move between brainstorming, research, note-taking, and fact-gathering that you never have to be stuck with the linear read-take notes-write-edit approach to writing.

—Ruth Halpern

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Product Information Number 169

Global German, Global French, Global Spanish

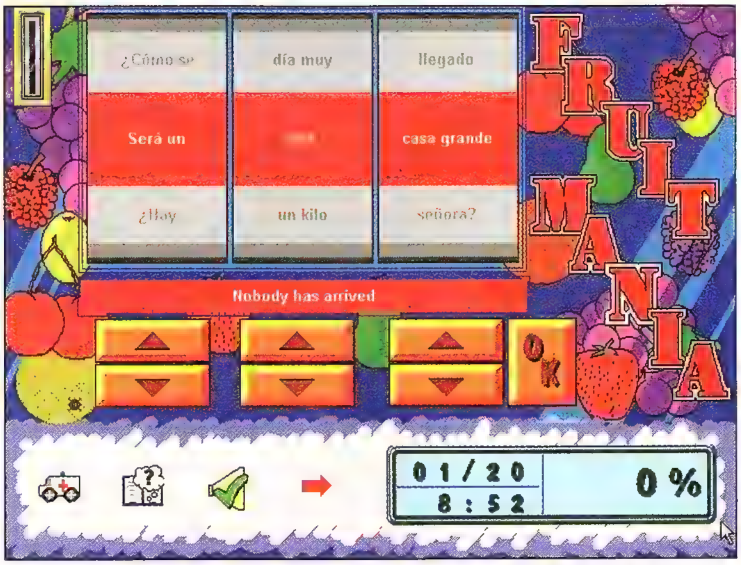
All the tools you need to learn a second, third, or fourth language

WINDOWS
$42 each
Mindscape
(800) 409-1497
(415) 883-5157

PROS
Varying skill levels, variety of tests, ability to focus thematically

CONS
Soundtrack makes you wish program included swear words

RATING ● ● ● ●



Nobody has arrived

Fruit mania. *Global Language*'s clever games make learning easier.

The most necessary element to learning a foreign language is, unfortunately, something that cannot be put on a CD-ROM: desire. If you already have the desire to learn another language, however, the *Global Language* series has everything else you need to get started.

The three programs released so far (French, German, and Spanish) have identical structures. The graphics and soundtracks differ (after all, it wouldn't make sense to use a picture of Dusseldorf in a program teaching French), but the teaching methods are identical.

Each program divides the learning process into two basic ways of language appropriation. Those who are using the program for a specific reason—a vacation to Barcelona, a business trip to Berlin, a daughter marrying into Swiss royalty, etc.—can choose to explore a language thematically. The user can focus on any of a number of different subjects. Others, who are studying the language without a specific goal other than fluency, can study individual language skills: verbs, grammar, phrases, and sentences.

The study methods effectively use the multimedia format. Language study is one area in which multimedia has several advantages over books. These discs combine the best elements of a good college textbook, a Berlitz tape set, and a tape recorder. The vocabulary builder, for example, is a grid of words that flip over to a different language when the cursor is placed on them. Sentence structure is tested using a game that lets the user rearrange sentences into proper order. And conversations can be created, taped, and altered. In short, the disc creates a solid structure for learning and still gives the user enough freedom to take the next step.

Global Languages also has a User Profile function, so you can monitor the progress you're making toward fluency and detect which areas need more work.

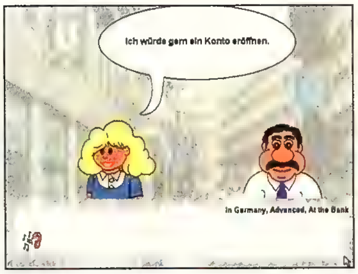
Finally, the programs create an individual dictionary for you, so you can add words from other sources as you grow in ability. This can be extremely helpful for those who need to develop specialized knowledge in another language and use obscure words frequently.

In working with the German and French discs, I found them to be both helpful and culturally appropriate. They are beginning discs, though, and so there was not very much in the way of colloquial speech or idiomatic expressions. This is meat-and-potatoes stuff. Still, it's well done.

A note of caution: The person who added the soundtracks to these discs was tone deaf. That's the only explanation I can come up with. I guarantee that if you use the German disc, you will have "Deutschland Uber Alles" ringing in your ears for hours afterward. And the French disc is even worse. The music on this title is some kind of techno-grunge that at first listen made me think I had a defective disc. After hearing the same screechy, pounding riff repeated note-for-note a few times, I understood that it was not the disc that was defective, but the composer.

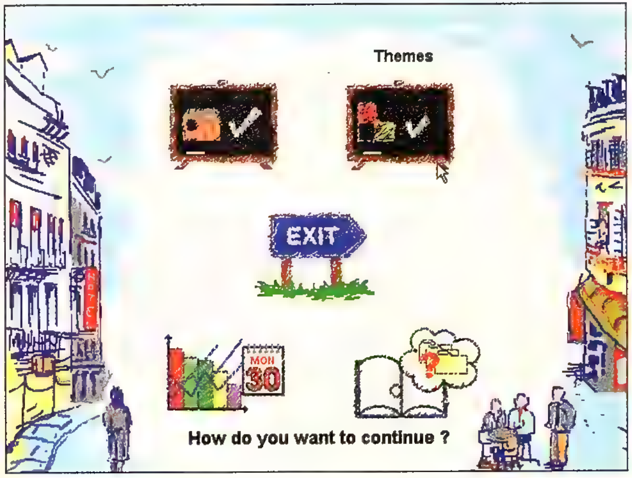
In a market glutted with language discs, this series is a good alternative to other, higher-priced programs. Beginners, and those who need a little refresher course, won't be disappointed with this. It's a total language workout.

—Peter Lefevre



Ich würde gern ein Konto eröffnen.

Each theme has conversations in three different skill levels.



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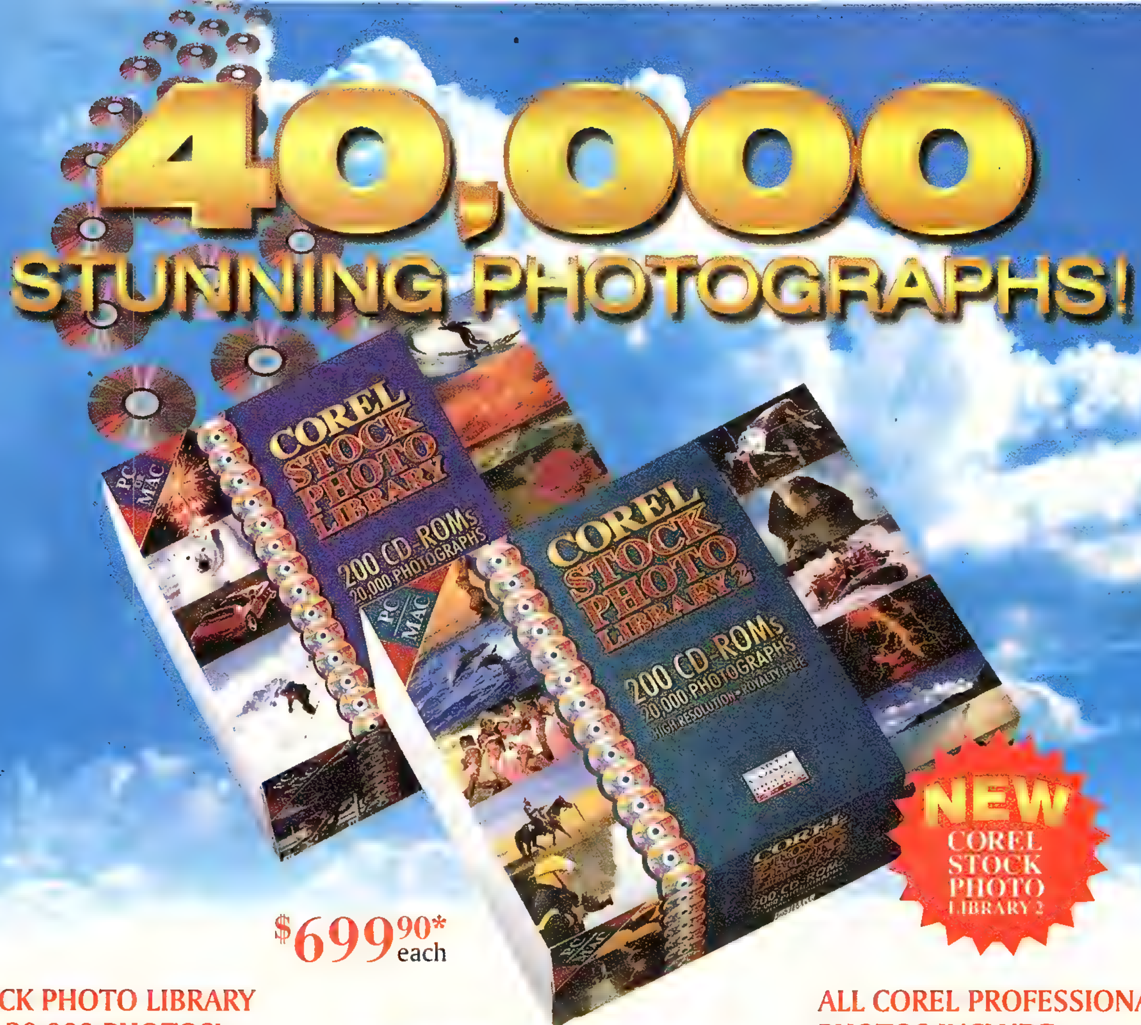
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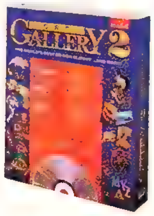

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Product Information Number 108

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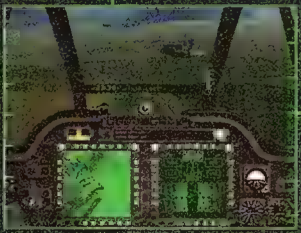
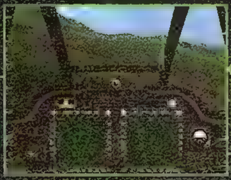


STRIKING NEW GRAPHICS TECHNOLOGY ("THE MESH") OF VOXEL, TEXTURES AND POLYS IS SO REALISTIC YOU CAN ALMOST SMELL THE CARNAGE. IT'LL BLOW YOUR MIND, AND THE INDUSTRY STANDARDS, TO BITS.

AN ENEMY TANK AS SEEN BY THE AH-64D LONGBOW.



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AH-64D
LONGBOW
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(for more information)

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Product Information Number 123

Word City Grand Prix CD

Word race takes wrong turn

WINDOWS
(Mac version also available)
$39.95
Sanctuary Woods
(800) 943-3664
(415) 286-6000
Ages 7 to 14

PROS
Race format may encourage some kids to learn faster

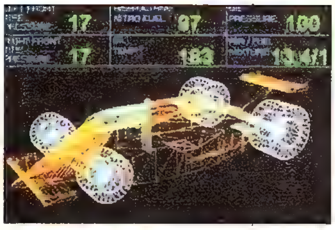
CONS
Misspellings and poorly structured questions

RATING ● ● ◐

Noah Webster meets Grand Prix in *Word City*, a videogame-style CD that uses a racing metaphor to help kids enjoy learning spelling and vocabulary.

The main activity is a racing maze, in which kids must answer a series of word questions to clear a route to the finish line through a variety of hazards, including goo-bombs dropped by a roving helicopter. The questions test spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, word identification, and synonyms and antonyms.

There are several theme areas and 16 levels of difficulty, so children with a wide range of interests and language skills can use the program. The reward for acing the maze? Players get to drive their cars through a grand prix circuit without having to answer any more pesky questions.



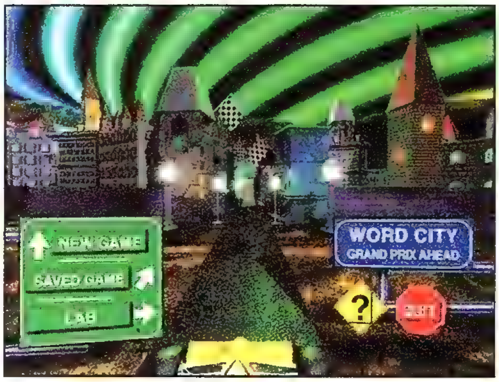
In the Lab (which would be better named the Pit Stop), kids or parents can customize spelling word lists.

You'd expect careful copyediting of an educational program, especially one that aims to teach language skills, but the creators of *Word City* seem to have skipped that step. My confidence in this game was seriously dented after finding a misspelling in the very first question I encountered.

The game design needs more work, too. For example, one type of question requires the player to remember a disappearing word and type it in again, but the disappearing word vanishes so quickly that kids are quite likely to miss it altogether.

The general air of speed and urgency, although appropriate for a race game, may frustrate some slower students who need more time to read or type out an answer. Finally, screens are a hodgepodge of busy, bizarre graphics, reflecting the fact that the program once had an alien-invaders theme rather than a racing one. All these problems make *Word City* a place children won't want to visit too often.

— Steven Anzovin



Word games await students age 7 to 14 in *Word City*.

Blue Tortoise

Even tortoises get the blues

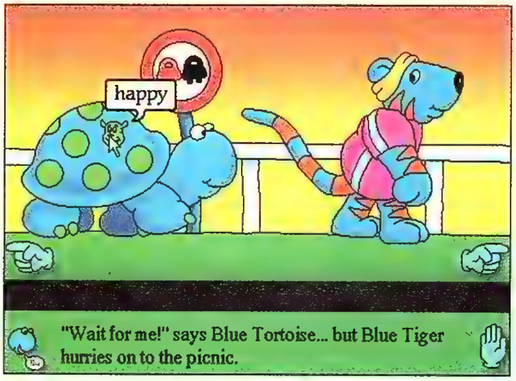
WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$39.95
Corel
(800) 455-3169
(613) 728-1010
Ages 3 to 6

PROS
Lots to do, visually impressive, encouraging story

CONS
Slow, sometimes awkward to navigate through

RATING ● ● ● ●

Blue Tortoise is a deceptively clever title that packs a lot of learning into an attractive and good-natured package. It's a reassuring disc; a digital Captain Kangaroo. The program is considerably deeper than it appears at first glance; you won't have to worry about your child burning out on it 10 minutes after it's out of the box.



"Wait for me!" says Blue Tortoise... but Blue Tiger hurries on to the picnic.

Blue Tortoise and Blue Tiger learn about happiness.

The story concerns Blue Tortoise, who is on his way to a picnic with his friends: Blue Tiger, Blue Giraffe, Blue Rabbit, and several other not-normally-blue animals. The moral is a cross between "slow and steady wins the race" and "everybody has their own strengths." These are good lessons for preschoolers.

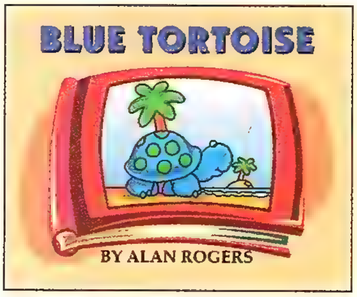
The graphics, spread over seven pages, feature bright colors and comic, friendly faces. Each page has a different set of interactive learning tools: some teach colors, some teach sounds or emotions. Nothing is preachy or dull.

Kids can choose to have to the story read aloud to them, or they can choose the coloring book activity. This is one of the great benefits of multimedia: reusable coloring books and no Crayola stains.

A Spanish-language option enables kids to hear the story in that language. Since childhood is the easiest time to learn a second language, every children's CD-ROM title should offer such an alternative soundtrack.

The disc is a bit slow in getting from place to place, but that's a small price to pay for the benefits. *Blue Tortoise* is an unpredictable, goofy, and charming disc that provides highly age-appropriate learning activities.

— Peter Lefevre



***Blue Tortoise* takes you along on a picnic.**

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Product Information Number 82

Compton's Encyclopedia, 1996; Microsoft Encarta 96

Encarta *wins battle of the reference titans*

Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, 1996 Edition

WINDOWS/WINDOWS 95
$50 (estimated)
Compton's NewMedia
(800) 261-6109
(619) 929-2500

PROS
Copious text, great browse feature, excellent voice-over help featuring Patrick Stewart

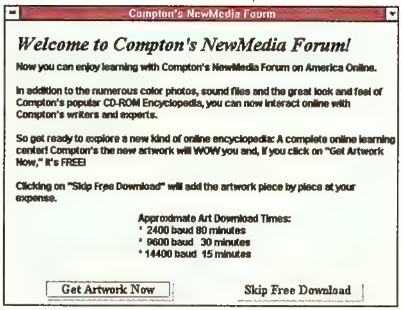
CONS
Can be slow to load, and the multimedia content is a little thin

RATING ● ● ● ◐

You may not own the hottest 3D adventure game or the grooviest educational titles, but odds are you own a multimedia encyclopedia. And for good reason: Multimedia is the best way to make dry, academic information really come alive—at least, when it's done well.

Two of the best digital references have just come out with new editions for 1996: Microsoft's *Encarta*, now in its third edition, and *Compton's*, which claims to have introduced the first interactive multimedia encyclopedia. They are *very* different products.

First, *Encarta 96* is a snap to install, running happily in 800 x 600 SVGA with only 55 percent of Windows' resources available. Installing *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia 1996*, on the other hand, was a visit to Multimedia Hell. It crashed repeatedly, and taxed me and my 486's resources to the limit. I finally had to switch to a lower res video driver and gave up trying to run my word processor. (Editor's note: We easily installed both titles on a 486 and a Pentium running Windows 3.1 and Windows 95, respectively. However, your experience may vary.)



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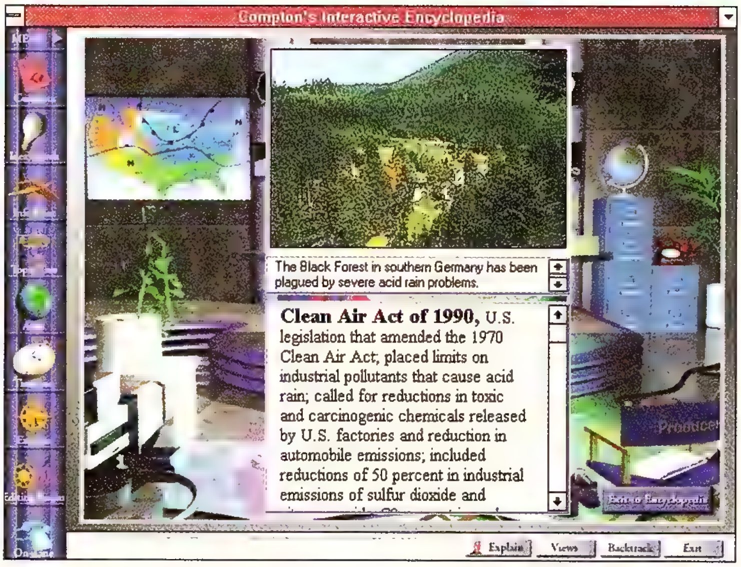
Approximate Art Download Times:
* 2400 baud 80 minutes
* 9600 baud 30 minutes
* 14400 baud 15 minutes

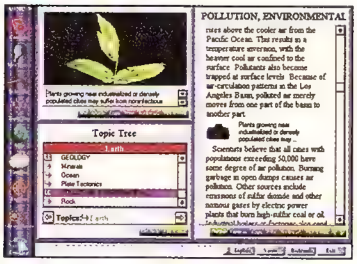
***Compton's* makes it easy to connect with its on-line NewMedia Forum on AOL. But with initial graphics download times of up to 80 minutes (at 2400 baud), you'll want to bring a good book to read.**



The Black Forest in southern Germany has been plagued by severe acid rain problems.

Clean Air Act of 1990, U.S. legislation that amended the 1970 Clean Air Act; placed limits on industrial pollutants that cause acid rain; called for reductions in toxic and carcinogenic chemicals released by U.S. factories and reduction in automobile emissions; included reductions of 50 percent in industrial emissions of sulfur dioxide and

Browsing through *Compton's* with its Explorer feature is big fun. For instance, clicking on the Environmental hot-link in the Newsroom finds an article on the Clean Air Act.



Plants growing near industrialized or densely populated cities may suffer from noninfectious

POLLUTION, ENVIRONMENTAL

rises above the cooler air from the Pacific Ocean. This results in a temperature inversion, with the heavier cool air confined to the surface. Pollutants also become trapped at surface levels. Because of air-circulation patterns in the Los Angeles Basin, polluted air merely moves from one part of the basin to another part.

Plants growing near industrialized or densely populated cities may ...

Scientists believe that all cities with populations exceeding 50,000 have some degree of air pollution. Burning garbage in open dumps causes air pollution. Other sources include emissions of sulfur dioxide and other noxious gases by electric power plants that burn high-sulfur coal or oil.

The Topic Tree is one of *Compton's* primary search engines. Here, starting with Earth, it has found its way to an article on environmental pollution.

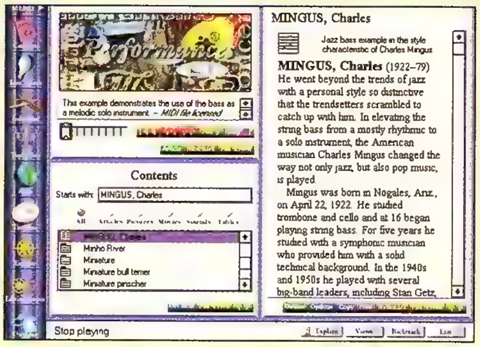
Both encyclopedias offer the option to run directly from disc with minimal hard disk installation. My advice: Don't do it. *Encarta* took 50 seconds to load; *Compton's* required nearly two minutes! If you can afford the disk space (up to 8MB for *Encarta* and 23MB for *Compton's*), you'll appreciate the discs' speedier performance.

So much for setup; what about content? For my first test, I asked both packages about jazz bassist Charles Mingus. *Encarta* brings you directly to an attractive full-screen display with a one-paragraph bio, a photo, and an audio sample demonstrating Mingus' unique bass style. Very nice.

Compton's entry on Mingus includes a 380-word essay, but the experience goes downhill from there. The audio sample is a "jazz bass example in the style characteristic of Charles Mingus." When you play the sample you get a distorted MIDI file of some mediocre mall-jazz. Not only is the tune *not* in Mingus' style, but unless you have a wavetable synthesis sound card, the audio clip sounds awful.

Next I quizzed the program's knowledge of American history. An *Encarta* search on the Battle of Bull Run produced a 500-word article, plus a fascinating, animated battle map on which you can follow troop

SAME ARTIST, DIFFERENT TUNES



This example demonstrates the use of the bass as a melodic solo instrument – *MIDI file licensed*

Starts with: MINGUS, Charles

Minho River
Miniature
Miniature bull terrier
Miniature pinscher

Stop playing

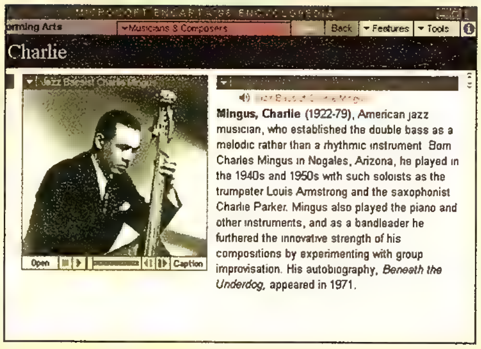
MINGUS, Charles

Jazz bass example in the style characteristic of Charles Mingus

MINGUS, Charles (1922–79)
He went beyond the trends of jazz with a personal style so distinctive that the trendsetters scrambled to catch up with him. In elevating the string bass from a mostly rhythmic to a solo instrument, the American musician Charles Mingus changed the way not only jazz, but also pop music, is played.

Mingus was born in Nogales, Ariz., on April 22, 1922. He studied trombone and cello and at 16 began playing string bass. For five years he studied with a symphonic musician who provided him with a solid technical background. In the 1940s and 1950s he played with several big-band leaders, including Stan Getz,

***Compton's* entry for jazz bassist Charles Mingus features a solid essay, but the audio sample ("in the style characteristic of Charles Mingus") is more characteristic of mediocre mall-jazz.**



Mingus, Charlie (1922-79), American jazz musician, who established the double bass as a melodic rather than a rhythmic instrument. Born Charles Mingus in Nogales, Arizona, he played in the 1940s and 1950s with such soloists as the trumpeter Louis Armstrong and the saxophonist Charlie Parker. Mingus also played the piano and other instruments, and as a bandleader he furthered the innovative strength of his compositions by experimenting with group improvisation. His autobiography, *Beneath the Underdog*, appeared in 1971.

***Encarta* includes a nice photo of a very young Mingus, but the coolest part of this entry is hidden behind the multimedia viewer: an excerpt from "Haitian Fight Song" in Mingus' inimitable style.**

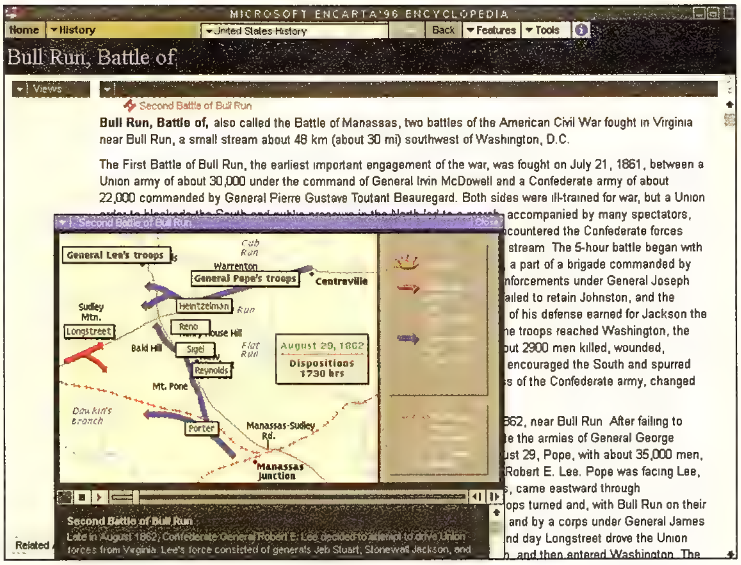
movements, ambushes, and retreats. *Compton's* has no specific entry for the Battle; instead, it refers you to a long article on the Civil War, where you'll find a 300-word section concerning Bull Run, a map (not animated), and a black-and-white illustration from the era.

Say you've been asked to write a report on environmental issues in the Amazon rain forest. *Compton's* doesn't list a rain forest topic, but if you use its Topic Tree utility you'll find a long article on "Pollution, Environmental." Idea Search (a full-text search engine) turns up articles on pollution in cities, conservation, and air. *Compton's* contains plenty of information, but it feels scattered and hard to navigate.

Encarta is better organized. Its Pinpointer search utility lets you swiftly locate entries on pollution, conservation, and rain forests—each accompanied by multimedia images and videos, a list of related articles, and a set of easy-to-follow hypertext links.

Or try "hurricanes." *Compton's* provides a short video showing the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew. *Encarta* gives you a detailed, 600-word article on hurricanes, plus a video clip of a violent storm in action and a fabulous high-altitude photo of a hurricane shot from the space shuttle *Discovery*.

Overall, the articles in *Encarta* seemed geared to an older, more sophisticated audience, whereas *Compton's* is closer to high school level. On the basis of content, *Encarta* is the better package.



Bull Run, Battle of, also called the Battle of Manassas, two battles of the American Civil War fought in Virginia near Bull Run, a small stream about 48 km (about 30 mi) southwest of Washington, D.C.

The First Battle of Bull Run, the earliest important engagement of the war, was fought on July 21, 1861, between a Union army of about 30,000 under the command of General Irvin McDowell and a Confederate army of about 22,000 commanded by General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard. Both sides were ill-trained for war, but a Union
accompanied by many spectators,
countered the Confederate forces
stream The 5-hour battle began with
a part of a brigade commanded by
nforcements under General Joseph
ailed to retain Johnston, and the
of his defense earned for Jackson the
e troops reached Washington, the
out 2900 men killed, wounded,
encouraged the South and spurred
s of the Confederate army, changed

362, near Bull Run After failing to
e the armies of General George
ust 29, Pope, with about 35,000 men,
Robert E. Lee. Pope was facing Lee,
, came eastward through
ops turned and, with Bull Run on their
and by a corps under General James
nd day Longstreet drove the Union
and then entered Washington. The

Second Battle of Bull Run

Late in August 1862, Confederate General Robert E. Lee decided to attempt to drive Union forces from Virginia. Lee's force consisted of generals Jeb Stuart, Stonewall Jackson, and

Encarta **provides plenty of background on the Battle of Bull Run, plus an animated battle map that makes you think you're hanging over the fray in a hot air balloon.**

However, if you'd rather just browse pages at random, *Compton's* is the better choice. Its just-for-fun browser, the Explorer, is a marvelous set of six "environments"—from Madcap Music Store to Grandma's Attic—packed with hidden hotspots and hypertext links that call up a randomized series of articles, images, and sounds on different topics. I loved it.

Encarta isn't quite as strong on this score. It offers Guided Tours in various categories, and an Interactivities section with maps, animations, and games designed to lead viewers deeper into subjects.

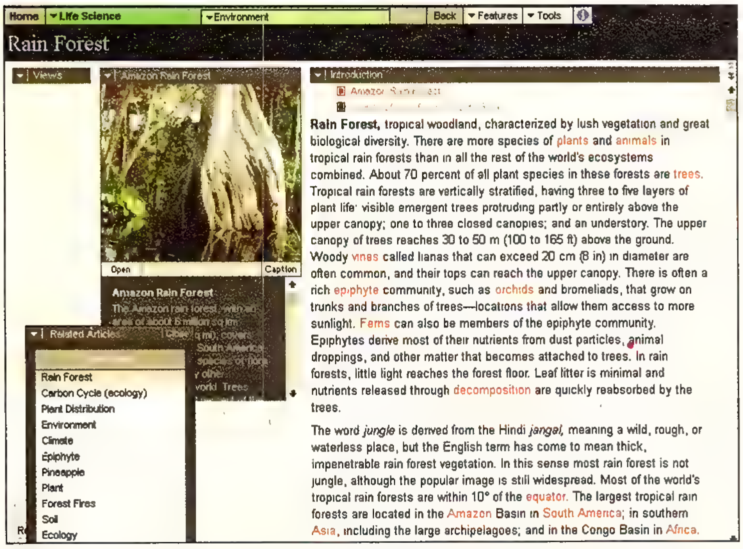
Both *Compton's* and *Encarta* help get you on-line, but neither is terribly exciting. *Compton's* logs you directly onto AOL. Once there, you can access Compton's NewMedia Forum, which offers updated articles, a software library, and the Education Connection where you can communicate with educators across the nation. *Encarta* connects you to Microsoft's MSN network—if you're running Windows 95. From there you'll be able to download monthly updates every month via MSN or Microsoft's World Wide Web page.

Despite its winning ways, *Encarta* can be tough to figure out. When I wanted to copy an article to my word processor, it took me five minutes before I found the Copy command hidden under an anonymous triangular menu marker. *Compton's* is friendlier. You start with a slick guided tour hosted by Patrick Stewart of *Star Trek* fame. Then you click on the Help icon at the bottom of the screen whenever something is troubling you, and Stewart returns to fill you in. *Encarta's* interface is more elegant, but *Compton's* is definitely easier to use.

Which of these encyclopedias would I buy for my family? It really comes down to content. *Encarta 96* offers more information, better multimedia, and clearer organization than *Compton's*.

You don't need an encyclopedia to figure this one out.

—*Michael Goodwin*

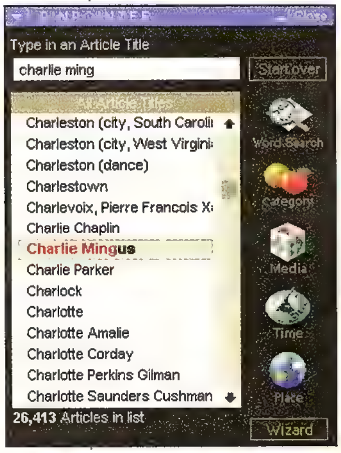


Rain Forest
Carbon Cycle (ecology)
Plant Distribution
Environment
Climate
Epiphyte
Pineapple
Plant
Forest Fires
Soil
Ecology

Rain Forest, tropical woodland, characterized by lush vegetation and great biological diversity. There are more species of plants and animals in tropical rain forests than in all the rest of the world's ecosystems combined. About 70 percent of all plant species in these forests are trees. Tropical rain forests are vertically stratified, having three to five layers of plant life: visible emergent trees protruding partly or entirely above the upper canopy; one to three closed canopies; and an understory. The upper canopy of trees reaches 30 to 50 m (100 to 165 ft) above the ground. Woody vines called lianas that can exceed 20 cm (8 in) in diameter are often common, and their tops can reach the upper canopy. There is often a rich epiphyte community, such as orchids and bromeliads, that grow on trunks and branches of trees—locations that allow them access to more sunlight. Ferns can also be members of the epiphyte community. Epiphytes derive most of their nutrients from dust particles, animal droppings, and other matter that becomes attached to trees. In rain forests, little light reaches the forest floor. Leaf litter is minimal and nutrients released through decomposition are quickly reabsorbed by the trees.

The word *jungle* is derived from the Hindi *jangal,* meaning a wild, rough, or waterless place, but the English term has come to mean thick, impenetrable rain forest vegetation. In this sense most rain forest is not jungle, although the popular image is still widespread. Most of the world's tropical rain forests are within 10° of the equator. The largest tropical rain forests are located in the Amazon Basin in South America; in southern Asia, including the large archipelagoes; and in the Congo Basin in Africa.

***Encarta*'s coverage of complex environmental issues in the equatorial rain forest is extremely well organized, thanks to hypertext links (shown in red), a list of related articles, and lots of multimedia videos and images.**



charlie ming

Charleston (city, South Caroli
Charleston (city, West Virgini
Charleston (dance)
Charlestown
Charlevoix, Pierre Francois X
Charlie Chaplin
Charlie Mingus
Charlie Parker
Charlock
Charlotte
Charlotte Amalie
Charlotte Corday
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Charlotte Saunders Cushman

26,413 Articles in list

***Encarta*'s powerful Pinpointer search engine lets you enter queries first-name-first, or first-name-last. You can filter the search by media, time, place, or a series of key words.**

Microsoft Encarta 96 Encyclopedia

WINDOWS/WINDOWS 95
$99.95
Microsoft Corp.
(800) 376-5125
(206) 882-8080

PROS
Excellent content, well organized, cross-references easy to use

CONS
Some features are hard to find

RATING ● ● ● ● ◐

Aristide's Return to Haiti
Open
Caption

Up-to-the-minute coverage of recent events is a crucial part of *Encarta.* Here, in a video clip, Haitian President Aristide returns from exile accompanied by Jimmy Carter.

ESPN Playing the Field: Interactive Baseball

This title covers all the bases

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$59.95
Intellimedia Sports
(800) 269-2101
(404) 262-0000

PROS
Ideal for aspiring young superstars; solid lineup of video clips

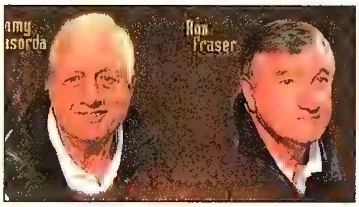
CONS
Wild format will cause some to miss the ball

RATING ● ● ● ●

Using narrated video segments, *Playing the Field* illustrates the basics of baseball. There are more than 36 clips covering defensive play alone.

Despite the fact that Major League Baseball has fallen from grace, the sport is still regarded as the American pastime. And for those who still love the game, ESPN and Intellimedia have put together a winning title with *Playing the Field: Interactive Baseball.*

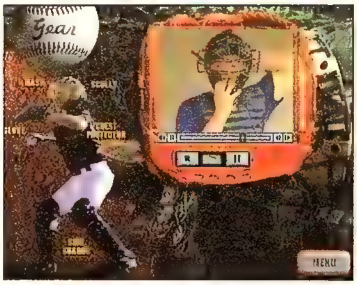
Narrated by Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda and Ron Fraser, former coach of University of Miami's top-ranked baseball team, *Playing the Field* is a video library with instructive clips about every conceivable baseball topic.



Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda joins University of Miami's Ron Fraser for a question-and-answer session.

As a reference tool, this disc has a lot to offer. It breaks baseball into five categories: hitting, playing your position, defensive play, pitching, and catching. Each category has several areas to explore. Catching, for example, is broken down into seven areas, each containing at least six instructional video clips. Some areas feature drills that can help you improve your playing skills.

Playing the Field also has a clever game titled "What's the call?" that asks you to play umpire. Unlike most "you make the call" activities, the situations are somewhat obscure and even those who know the game well will miss a few of these curve balls.



Playing the Field describes some of the finer points of baseball.

Overall, *Playing the Field* works more as a reference than a tutorial. Laid out so that you can navigate through it easily, this title will certainly improve your knowledge of baseball. And between innings, you may use the disc to launch to Intellimedia's Web site.

— Steven L. Kent

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Product Information Number 91

Great Rivers of the West; Interactive Fly Fishing School

One's a swimming success, the other flounders

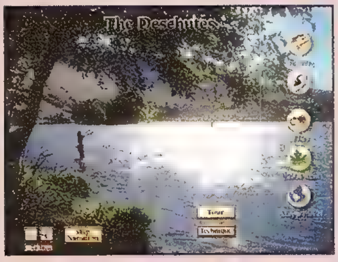
The film *A River Runs Through It* boosted interest in fly fishing all over the country. As depicted in the film, fly fishing is as much therapy as sport.

Mastering the graceful skills it demands, however, is no easy task. Unlike other forms of sport fishing, you can't just drop a baited hook in the water—or cast and retrieve an artificial lure—to catch fish. How, then, do you go about learning how to fly fish?

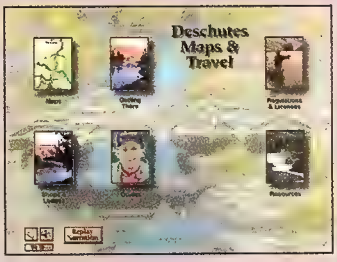
If instruction in the sport is what you're after, you might be tempted by Intellimedia Sports' *ESPN Interactive Fly Fishing School.* Unfortunately, this fish-u-mentary is seldom more interesting than those fishing shows you see on television on sleepy Sunday afternoons. You know, the ones featuring boatloads of potbellied, tobacco-spitting men barking out "Looks like we caught ourselves a big one!"

Hosted by Patrick Markey, producer of *A River Runs Through It,* this two-disc set opens with an introduction to the basics of the sport.

GONE FISHIN'



Glorious photographs are one of the highlights of *Great Rivers of the West...*



...but you'll also find plenty of fishing tips and travel information for six of the most beautiful fly-fishing rivers in the western United States.

In the first disc you'll find descriptions of casting terms, materials, etiquette, types of trout, flies, and river conditions. The second disc focuses on specific fishing techniques, taught by experts who worked as consultants during the production of the Hollywood film. This is practical information for novices, but the poor quality of the videos diminishes its educational value.

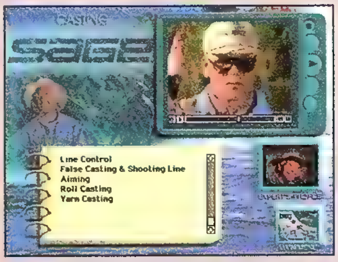
The highlight of *ESPN Interactive Fly Fishing School* is the Match the Hatch game in its interactive Fly Box module. The game tests your ability to pick the most effective fly for a given set of conditions (season, weather, species of insects abundant in the stream, and so on).

One thing about this disc that I found alarming, however, was the blatant product placements. The Casting segment, for example, is "sponsored" by Sage Fishing Products, and a disclosure under each photo in the Equipment section states "Courtesy of Dan Bailey's Fly Shop." I can only hope that other multimedia developers won't follow Intellimedia's lead in copying the revenue-raising tactics of television producers. Isn't it enough that consumers are being asked to pay nearly $60 for this title?

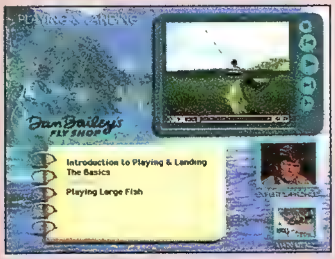
If you're an avid fly fisher (or just an armchair traveler), Virtual AdVentures' *Fly Fishing: Great Rivers of the West* is the perfect disc. The program doesn't deliver much educational value, but it does an excellent job of documenting six of the most majestic river fisheries in the western United States.

Packed with more than 200 photographs and 48 mini-movies of the Madison, Yellowstone, Deschutes, San Juan, Green, and Henry's Fork rivers, the disc also contains field guides filled with practical information on lodging, local tackle stores, suggested flies, and the best months to visit. Each river also has a personal tour guide who tells tall tales of angling as he takes you on a virtual tour of his favorite fishing holes.

SOMETHING SMELLS FISHY



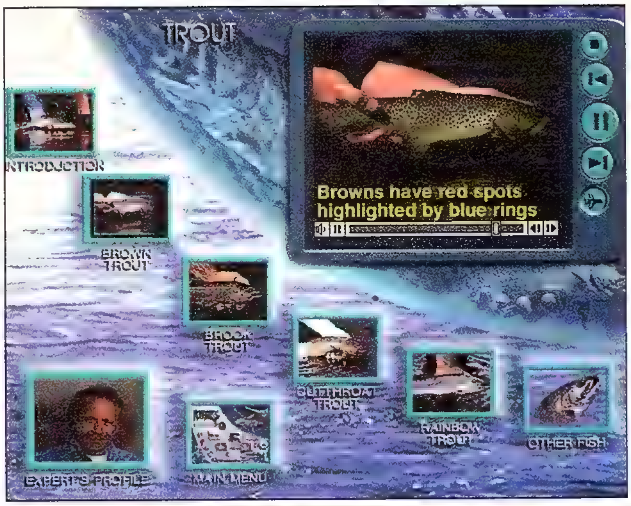
ESPN Interactive Fly Fishing School offers decent instruction on the finer points of fly fishing...



...but you might find yourself distracted by blatant advertisements for branded gear.

Seasoned anglers will do okay by *ESPN Interactive Fly Fishing School*, but the disc fails to deliver much more of an experience than an inexpensive videotape. If an expedition (real or virtual) to some of our country's legendary fishing spots is what you crave, *Great Rivers of the West* will have you hooked.

—*Jeffrey Adam Young*



Browns have red spots highlighted by blue rings

The ESPN disc will help you learn to identify different varieties of trout.

Fly Fishing: Great Rivers of the West

MAC
(Windows version also available)
$49.95
Virtual AdVentures
(distributed by IVI Publishing)
(800) 437-0005
(206) 292-1140

PROS
Both entertaining and practical

CONS
Lacks depth of instructional information

RATING ● ● ● ●

ESPN Interactive Fly Fishing School

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$59.95
Intellimedia Sports
(800) 269-2101
(404) 262-0000

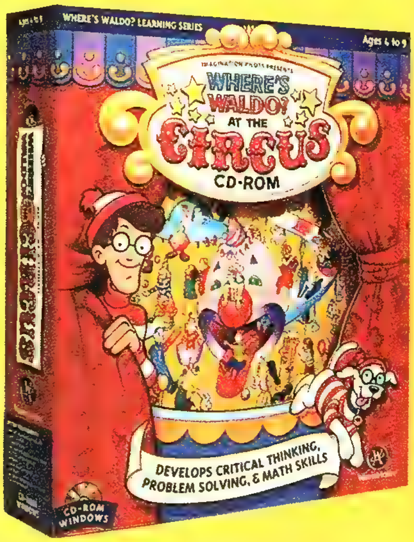
PROS
Extensive technique training by experts

CONS
Fails to take advantage of medium; could just as effectively been produced on videotape

RATING ● ● ◐

Learning With The Greatest Of Ease.

FOR CHILDREN AGES 4 - 9. FOR WINDOWS® CD-ROM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IMAGINATION PILOTS PRESENTS
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CD-ROM
DEVELOPS CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING, & MATH SKILLS
CD-ROM WINDOWS

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Product Information Number 189

The Great Artists Collections

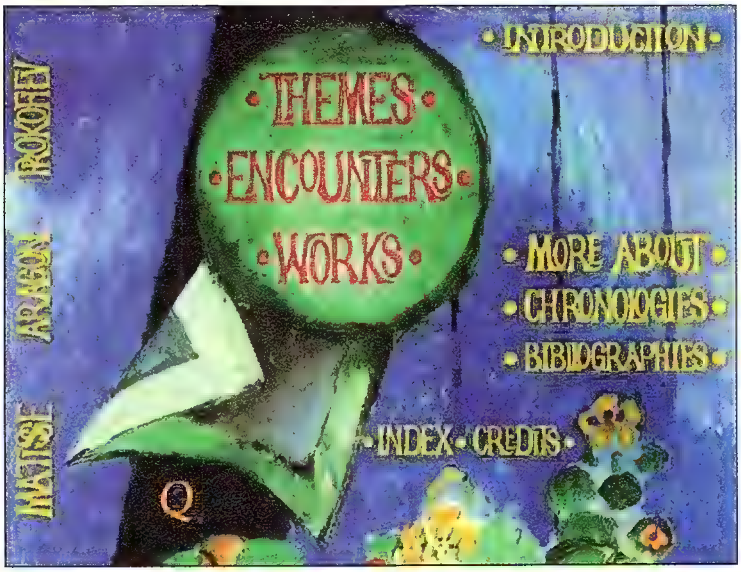
Instructive explorations of modern and impressionist masters

MAC
(Windows versions also available)
$49.98 each
Arborescence/New Line New Media
(Distributed by Turner Home Entertainment)
(800) 294-0022
(404) 827-0649

PROS
An aesthete's delight: beautiful art, moving poetry, evocative music

CONS
Connections between artists are sometimes forced and the navigation controls are hard to use

RATING ●●●◐



The first screen in the disc on Matisse, Aragon, and Prokofiev is designed in a style that recalls placards for the Ballets Russe.

What's the best way to learn about the artistic movements of the past? French developer Arborescence has come up with the novel idea of juxtaposing the works of a painter, a writer, and a composer from each era, with the intention of having them shed light on one another as well as on the world in which they lived. For people who are interested but not yet well educated in matters of art—curious high school students, for instance—this is a reasonably effective way to learn.

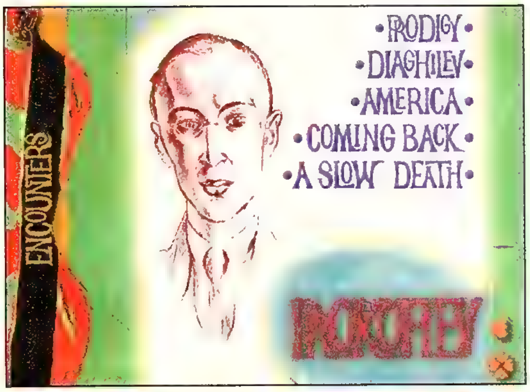
The first disc in the *Great Artists Collection* focuses on the late 19th century. Subtitled "The Impressionist Revolution," it focuses on Claude Monet, the great master of landscapes created through the play of color and light; Claude Debussy, who used music in much the same evocative way that Monet used paint; and the bohemian poet Paul Verlaine. The second disc follows the careers of three early modernists: Henri Matisse, the post-impressionist whose later work became a celebration of color and shape; Sergei Prokofiev, the innovative Russian composer best known in America for his children's theater piece "Peter and the Wolf"; and Louis Aragon, the Surrealist poet and novelist.

In addition to basic reference material (chronology, bibliography, additional information, and index of works), the Main Menu offers you a choice of three interlinked ways in which to approach the subject matter. Encounters introduces you to people and places that influenced each artist, through texts, quotes, and photographs. Themes lets you investigate topics that in some (rather arbitrary) way connect all three artists: "The Sea," "Towns and Fields," and "Colors of Time," for the impressionists; "Women," "Dance," and "The Golden Age," among others, for the modernists. In the Works section you can tour an exhibition of paintings, attend a concert, or read anthologies of poetry (some of it declaimed aloud by actors); there are also long quotations from each artist in which he explains something about his goals and principles. Works also gives you the opportunity to study the working methods of the painters.

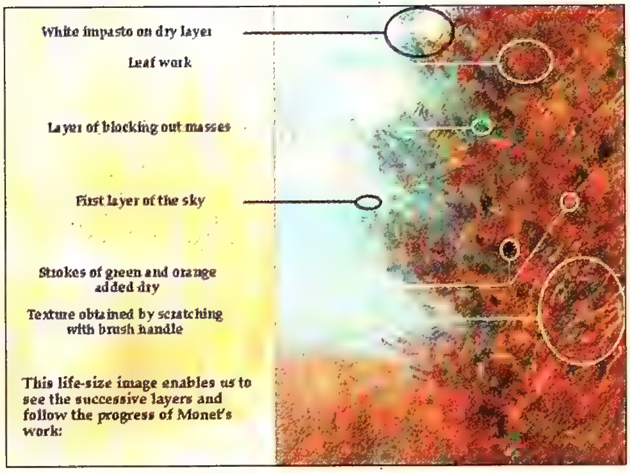
A few problems with the presentation make these discs somewhat less enjoyable than they could be. On a Mac, the program resets your monitor's palette to 256 colors, but doesn't revert to the previous setting when it quits. You may get bleary-eyed trying to read the long text sections, which are crammed together without paragraph indentations in a hard-to-read typeface. Here and there you find misspellings, or a French word pops up in the wrong place, missed by the translator (you get a choice of French original or English version when you boot up). At times you may find yourself experiencing sensory overload, squinting at words superimposed on a painting or photomontage while you listen to a voice reading something entirely different over a background of unrelated music.

Still, as you make your way through the material on these discs, you know you're in the hands of people who truly love these artists and who are toiling mightily to help you understand why they're important.

—*Janet Podell*



In your Encounter with Prokofiev, you'll learn about his difficult trip to America.


White impasto on dry layer
Leaf work
Layer of blocking out masses
First layer of the sky
Strokes of green and orange added dry
Texture obtained by scratching with brush handle

This life-size image enables us to see the successive layers and follow the progress of Monet's work:

Curious as to how Monet created his impressionist effects? This section gives a stroke-by-stroke description of the artist's technique.

Fifty years after his death, Matisse's decorative ability is still unmatched.

Great American Cooking

Surf back to mom's kitchen on a wave of mushroom soup!

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$49.95
Better Homes and Gardens (distributed by Multicom Publishing)
(800) 850-7272
(206) 343-5934

PROS
Many practical, automated features to help novice cooks plan, shop for, and prepare nutritionally balanced meals

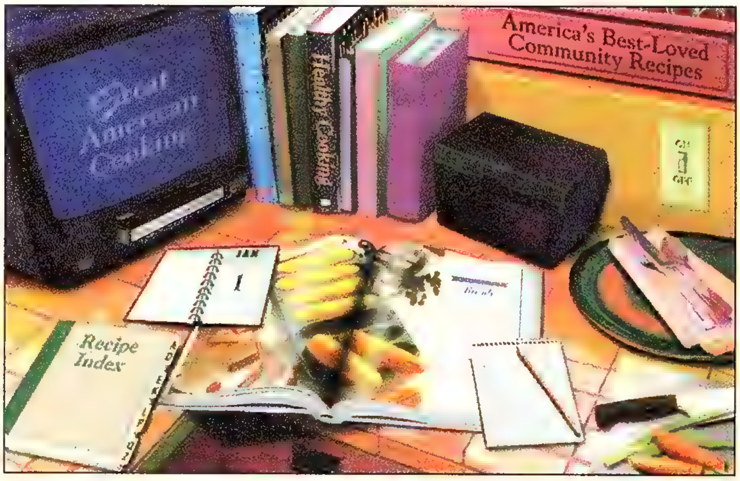
CONS
Too many dated dishes, involving packaged ingredients, heavy sauces, and less-than-optimal techniques

RATING ● ● ◐

Many recipes come with expandable photos: this shows a mussel getting debearded, an operation scary enough to deserve a video (not just a still).

Put on your checkered apron, boot up your hard disk, and time-travel back to the pre-PC, pre-JC (Julia Child) era. Wow the folks at the potluck with your gourmet casserole of precooked chicken, stuffing mix, rice mix, and canned string beans swathed in mayo and canned condensed cream of celery soup. (You can even substitute fresh string beans without ruining the dish!)

This recipe is typical of *Great American Cooking*, which computerizes two Better Homes and Gardens cookbooks: *Complete Guide to Food and Cooking* and *America's Best-Loved Community Recipes.* Given that BHG magazine is still in business, a cuisine genre that might be called "Dated Dishes" obviously continues to appeal to a sizable population, albeit probably not to sophisticated urban cooks. To the latter, the *Complete Guide* may exude the aroma of the home economist rather than the inspired chef. For instance, recipes include "curried" dishes but no authentic curries, while the Pacific Rim is represented by "Chinese-American" restaurant standbys Moo Goo Gai Pan and Chicken Chow Mein.



***Great American Cooking*'s opening screen: The dinner plate leads to the helpful What's For Dinner feature, while the cutting board gets to All About Cooking.**

Community Recipes (drawn from Junior League cookbooks and the like) harks back even further, to Eisenhower-era "housewife" cookery. Maybe it's not nice to make fun of Mom's cooking, but a lot of moms (mine included) served pretty awful meals once they fell in love with "food products," as opposed to actual food.

Aside from recipes that probably came from the back labels of cans, most other selections are slightly creative reworkings of old newspaper food-page recipes. Most main dishes on the disk involve heavy gravies thickened with cornstarch or flour, rather than today's lighter sauces based on high-heat reduction of the liquid.

From the recipe screens, you can click on hypertext to bring up definitions and explanations, and often you can watch a technique video. Although all roads lead (ever so slowly) back to the recipes, the disc includes numerous supplementary features. About This Recipe prints the dish's history on-screen, while a horribly perky female voice reads the print aloud in case you're illiterate. What's For Dinner is a filter that lets you specify nutritional values ("low fat," "low sodium," etc.) and/or courses, prep time, or ingredients.

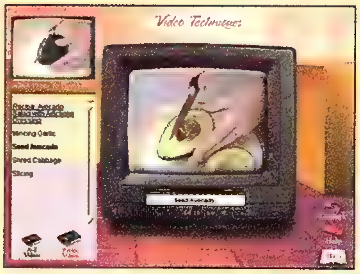
You can print automated shopping lists and menu planners from the recipes you choose (including their nutritional values), or type your own recipes into a personal collection. A useful group of tables includes weight conversions and ingredient substitutions; the cooking methods table, however, has virtually all vegetables boiled and/or nuked, including the nightmare of boiled eggplant cubes. (Nowhere could I find the classic slice/salt/drain technique, which draws excess moisture and bitterness from eggplant before it's pan fried or baked—NOT boiled, please!)

Some 150 technique videos are narrated by a male voice but show female hands demonstrating. Some are excellent, but others (e.g., for peeling an avocado—painfully, from the outside, instead of just scooping out the flesh) are far from optimum.

For total beginners, however, any technique is better than none, and odds are that even stodgy recipes may be better than flying blind.

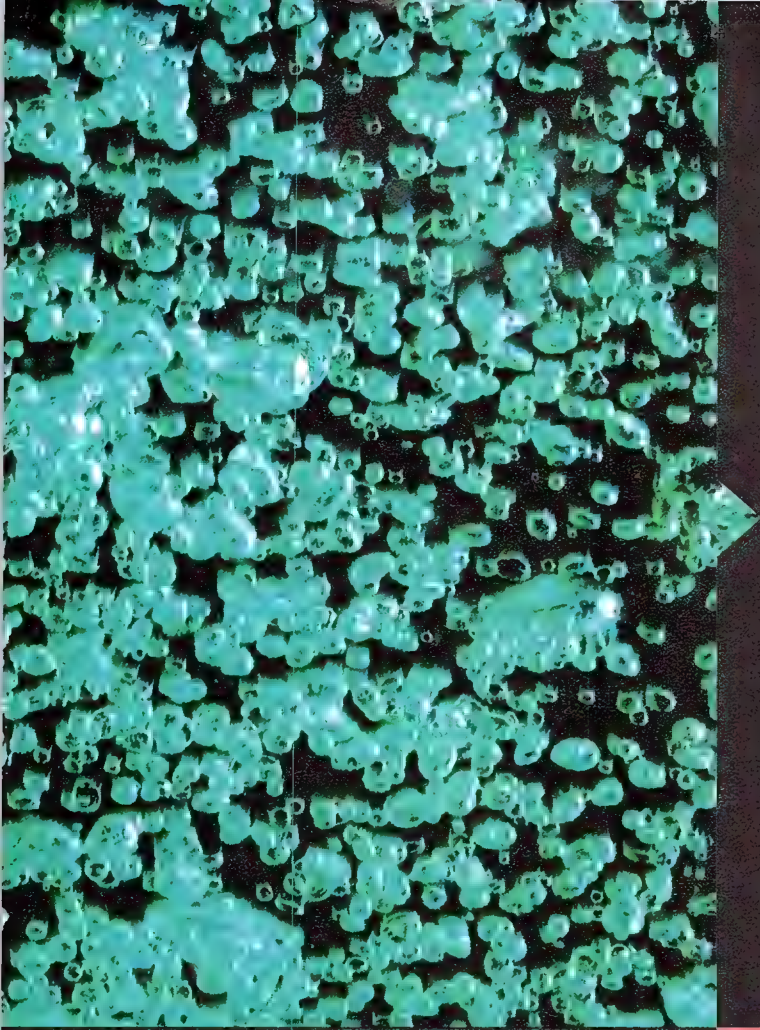
— Naomi Wise

IT'S THE PITS



◀ **On video: a man's voice and a woman's hands demonstrate how to pit an avocado.**

▶ **Avocado salad, dressed with bottled marinated artichokes. From this point, you can call up definitions or a technique video. You can also "send" the recipe to your menu planner, shopping list, or printer.**



TO YOUR KIDS.

THE WORLD IS AN

OYSTER.

◆

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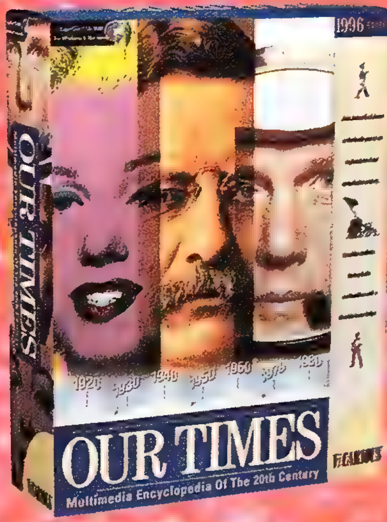
Product Information Number 186



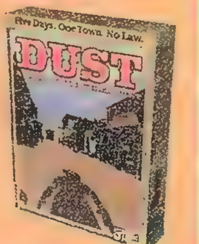
OPEN
DRY GOODS
Fill These.

DUST™

A TALE OF THE WIRED WEST

Practice your aim. Sharpen your wits. Dig in your spurs. You're in Diamondback, where trouble's brewin' like bad coffee. It's going to take someone who can draw fast and think faster to keep the peace among 40 of the most interactive characters ever assembled on one CD-ROM. Fools, grifters, heroes, and cynics—everyone's got a story to share. And a secret to hide.

Dust: A Tale of the Wired West is a digital adventure with a novel take on the classic Western—a fresh, funny, first-person interactive saga. Outstanding 3D graphics and sound plus a clean and simple interface pull you into the boisterous frontier world of 1882 New Mexico. Shoot-outs and arcade-style action, games of poker, blackjack, and checkers, and a host of challenging mysteries are woven throughout a compelling story that will make for hours of entertainment. Discover *Dust* and how the West was fun.



A CD-ROM Adventure for Macintosh & Windows.

Available at your local software dealer. To order by phone call 800-GTE-TODA. For more info, contact CyberFlix:

E-mail cyberflix@aol.com

Web site http://www.im.gte.com/Dust

CYBERFLIX INCORPORATED

GTE Entertainment

Microsoft Windows 95

TEEN T AGES 13+

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Product Information Number 109

The Encyclopedia of U.S. Endangered Species

A no-nonsense guide to the state of endangered wildlife

WINDOWS/MAC HYBRID
$29.95
Zane Publishing
(800) 769-3723
(214) 746-5510

PROS
Well-documented, content-rich resource for research or educational purposes

CONS
Unimaginative, dated design will fail to impress multi-media-savvy consumers

RATING ● ● ●

Environmentalism is a very hip subject. It's topical, global, controversial, politically correct, and the chosen passion of some of our finest artists, photographers, and writers. It's also a very important subject worthy of serious attention.

The Encyclopedia of U.S. Endangered Species is an incredibly thorough repository of information about plants and animals in the United States that are facing possible extinction. It is not, however, hip. And with CD-ROM aesthetics being as sophisticated as they are, this title may be a disappointment to those who want to be swept away as well as educated.

The design has a building block look of large sans-serif type supported by photos. Red type is a heading and green type indicates a hypertext link for pop-up definitions. Photos can be enlarged for a full-screen view. Maps are rudimentary. Designwise, that's about it.

There is a simple reason for this utilitarian approach. The title was developed with Zane Publishing's PowerCD authoring and publishing engine, an interactive multimedia-based tool that allows experts to share their knowledge via CD-ROM with others. The idea is that if experts can come up with the content, they have the means to easily drop it into this predesigned format and make it available to the public. It's a very democratic way to share large quantities of information and, at $24.95, it is certainly agreeably priced.

To its credit, this title does bring you in touch with the ongoing struggle for survival. As you read the reports you get a picture of the trusting, curious Northern swift fox who, as its habitat shrinks, nests in cultivated fields exposing her den to shooting, trapping, and poisoning. A screen saver option allows you to enjoy the works of the five contributing photographers.

There are four multimedia presentations that introduce various aspects of wildlife conservation, contributed by representatives of major conservation organizations.

Outstanding wildlife photo stills can be imported to a screen-saver program.

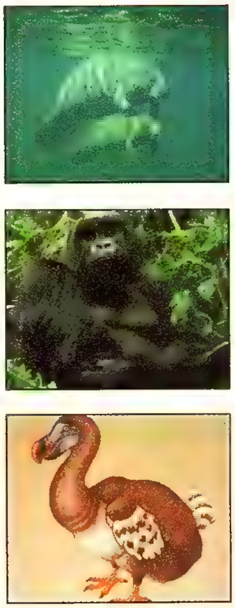
At the heart of this title is the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973. While the act is not reproduced in this disc, it is in fact, the ultimate source of almost all of the program's information. The Individual Species Profile that is available for each species comes from the reports that the Fish and Wildlife Service must provide before a species can be federally listed. These reports contain 16 categories of information including description, habitat, food habits, taxonomy, economic status, reasons for current status, geographic distribution, recovery plan, and remaining population. This information can take up 20 to 60 screens (considering the huge typeface used, this is not as intimidating as it might seem).

There are numerous means of referencing and cross-referencing content. Species can be located by common name, scientific name, taxon (amphibians, birds, crustaceans, fish, insects, plants, reptiles), and by state.

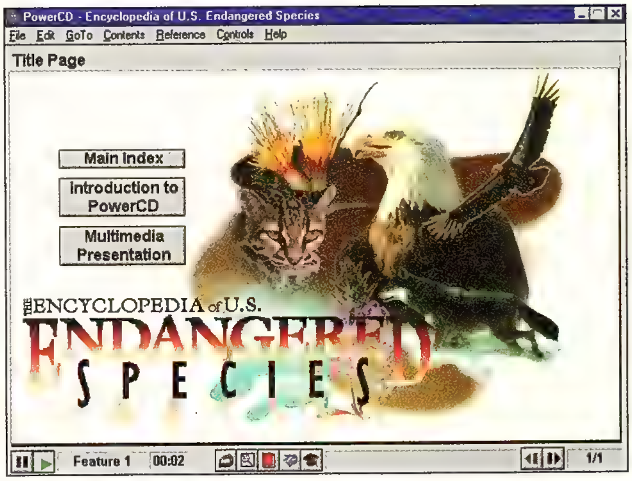
This encyclopedia is a natural for classroom use. The large type and uncrowded screens make it accessible by upper elementary school children. Quizzes can be constructed from a question bank for each species. An instructor can specify the number of questions and the time in which the questions must be answered. When the quiz is over, the answers are checked and tabulated with the time spent on each question. There is also a feature for individual questions in which explanations are given for each right and wrong answer.

When deciding whether to purchase this title the main question to ask yourself is, "Do I need the information?" While it is not a multimedia masterpiece, it delivers important goods at an affordable price.

— Marianne Cotter



Going, Going, Gone.



The Encyclopedia of Endangered Species **is a virtual repository of information regarding not only endangered plants and animals but the entire ecosystem.**

see it on the Disc!

The Beauty of Japan Through the Art of Sushi

A cookbook and cultural exploration

WINDOWS
(Mac version available)
$40 estimated
Arome Interactive
(916) 894-8407

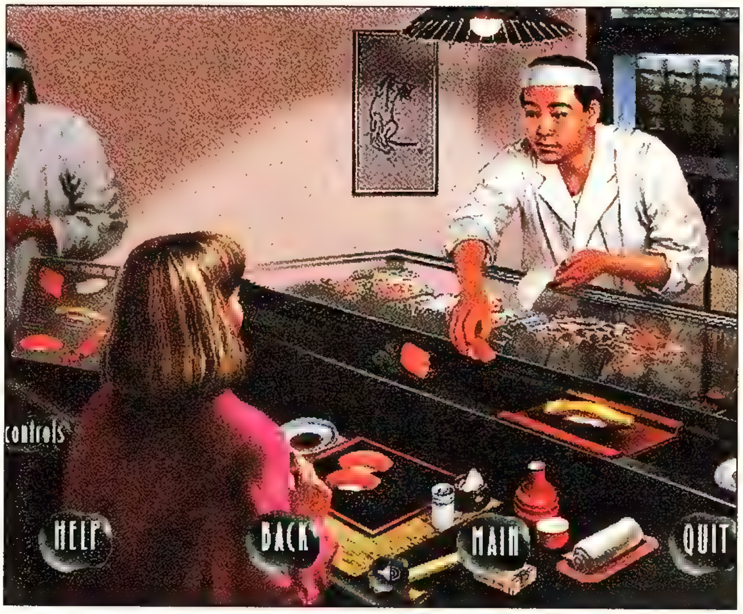
PROS
Elegant presentation of a wide array of subjects relating to sushi

CONS
Slightly clumsy cookbook interface slows down the cooking process

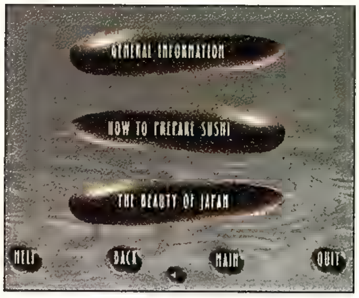
RATING ●●●●

Last year's *Four Paws of Crab* interactive Thai cookbook was an excellent example of how food could be used as a common-ground launchpad for cross-cultural exploration. In a similar approach, *The Beauty of Japan Through the Art of Sushi* is an investigation of Japanese tradition by way of its popular cuisine. *Beauty of Japan* is both an indispensable cookbook and an understandable introduction to Japanese culture, history, and customs.

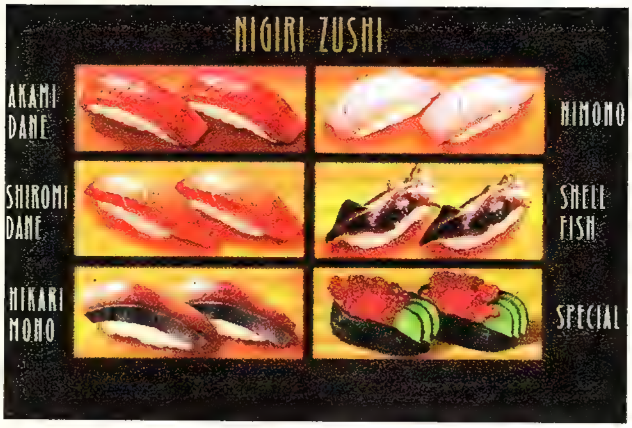
Initially, the information is divided into three main sections, the first offering a frame of reference to sushi newcomers. This informative section is incredibly detailed on a wide range of topics, including everything you wanted to know about Japan, the history of sushi, sushi-eating etiquette, and a glossary of sushi terminology. The second main section is an interactive sushi preparation school. The final section explores Japanese visual arts through sushi and flower arrangement.



Learn about sushi-eating etiquette by touching a hot spot and listening to the narrator.



There are infinite journeys, but you begin with only three paths.



***The Beauty of Japan* introduces you to the art of preparing nigiri sushi —fillets of raw fish molded onto fingers of seasoned rice.**

There is much to be learned here, from realizing that you should dip only the fish side of Nigiri sushi into the soy sauce or else the rice will crumble apart, to learning that the place of origin for this fish and rice combo was China and not Japan. I was surprised to learn that sushi was originally designed as a way to preserve fish without refrigeration. Some of this knowledge is not essential to create or even enjoy sushi, but it does make the experience more complete.

Beauty of Japan continually strives for a well-rounded experience, bringing us into its mesmerizing fold, fact by fact, the way a good storyteller lures an audience into a story.

The informative sushi cookbook section includes all you need to know to make your unsuspecting guests happily chomp down on raw fish. But if you are going to do sushi right, you'll need some unconventional tools like a bamboo mat and a fan specially designed for cooling sushi rice.

One of the flaws in this title is the accessibility of these recipes. You can find each recipe by narrowing down your selection from a number of categories. This becomes impractical when you're in the midst of food preparation, but luckily the recipes can be printed. A complete recipe index would have been an easier if perhaps less elegant approach.

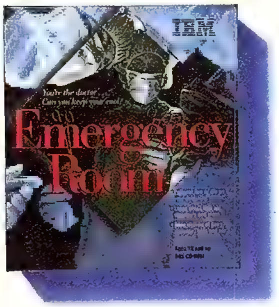
The interface is decidedly simple; small stones serve as your control icons along the bottom of the screen. Hot spots on the screen are easily distinguishable—your arrow pointer changes into a chef's hat. As more complex levels are reached, new stones appear to control them. In the cookbook section, for example, you can quickly toggle between the ingredients list and the preparation instructions via small stones marked ING and PREP.

The most unexpected section of the disc lies in the third main section, where you can learn Ikebana (the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging), the revered Japanese Tea Ceremony, and sushi arrangement. If you wish to give your guests more than just a taste of Japan, this section provides the extra material that will help make your evening more authentic.

—Jeffrey Adam Young

Doctor, the patient is bleeding profusely from a gunshot wound. He's losing consciousness. His blood pressure is 80 over 18. Should you operate? Give CPR? You have 60 seconds to save his life.

Thank God it's only a game.



another human drama from our fun & games dept.

The emergency room of Legacy™ Memorial Hospital has hired a new doctor: you. Emergency Room CD-ROM uses real actors in a photo-realistic setting, with over 35 minutes of full-motion video, 14 exam tools, 20 lab tests, and X-rays for every part of the body. It's the most realistic medical experience you can have without malpractice insurance. Check out Emergency Room on the Internet at http://www.cdrom.ibm.com To order, visit your local retailer or call 1 800 426-7235 (source code 5210).

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Product Information Number 137

Distant Suns—First Light

A complex voyage to yonder skies

WINDOWS
$99.95
Virtual Reality Laboratories
(800) 829-8754
(805) 545-8515

PROS
Lets you manipulate location, date, and time to experience the heavens in countless ways

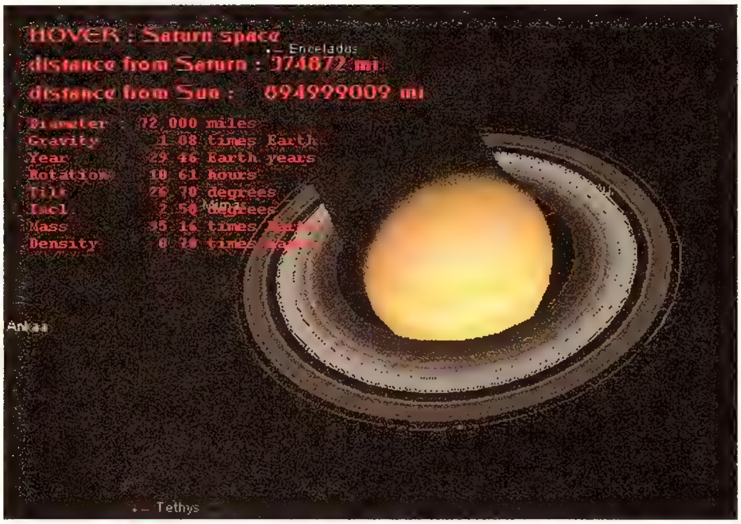
CONS
High price and steep learning curve will discourage the layperson

RATING ●●●

Roughly speaking, earth science is to astronomy what checkers is to chess. Even though they are both played on a board, one is infinitely more complex than the other. Therefore, a CD-ROM that deals with astronomy, and deals with it in depth as this title does, is going to have a much higher learning curve than one that deals with geography or oceanography.

Distant Suns—First Light has made the most of multimedia technology and features a remarkably deep and sophisticated desktop planetarium. It's so sophisticated, in fact, that casual users might find it a little bewildering, especially if they don't want to be glued to the extensive manual.

There is, however, a tutorial that provides an introduction to astronomy and the program. Novices are advised to go through all four sections of this tutorial before embarking on their voyage. Without some knowledge of the solar system and basic terms like *declination* and *right ascension*, you are literally just clicking in the dark.


```
HOVER : Saturn space
distance from Saturn : 374872 mi
distance from Sun :    694999009 mi
Diameter :  72 000 miles
Gravity      1 08 times Earth
Year        29 46 Earth years
Rotation    10 61 hours
Tilt        26 70 degrees
Incl         2 50 degrees
Mass        95 16 times
Density      0 70 times
```
Enceladus
Ankaa
Tethys

In *Distant Suns* you can switch to the hover mode, choose a planet, and zoom in.

Okay, that's enough complaining. The serious astronomer is really going to love this one. *Distant Suns—First Light* offers many features that you control and manipulate. When you choose the calendar, you can view moon phases and dates for comets, eclipses, and meteor showers. Go to the planetarium and view the sky as it looks from your backyard tonight or on any night. You can also set the planets in motion and watch them complete their rotations.

Other features include a simulated landing on Mars, reconstructed from altitude readings taken by the Viking missions; movies of space travel and moonwalks; and the navigator tool, which helps you move through the heavens.

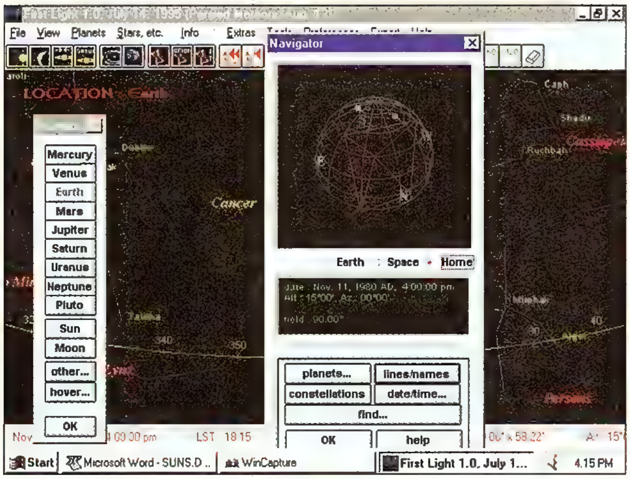
In addition to these "activities," there is a plethora of celestial information, including the Hubble Guide Star Catalog, which lists over 16 million stars. There are also tables for eclipses, planets, constellations, stars, and meteor showers. The print function works just about anywhere in the program, with as much or as little detail as you want (a great asset for teachers). So stargazers can print a map of the stars for any night of the year and take it with them for reference.

Distance Suns—First Light comes with Adobe Acrobat to help you access the manual. It also has an uninstaller icon, which is a sign of good software citizenship. However, the icons along the top of the screen cry out for some kind of on-screen identification.

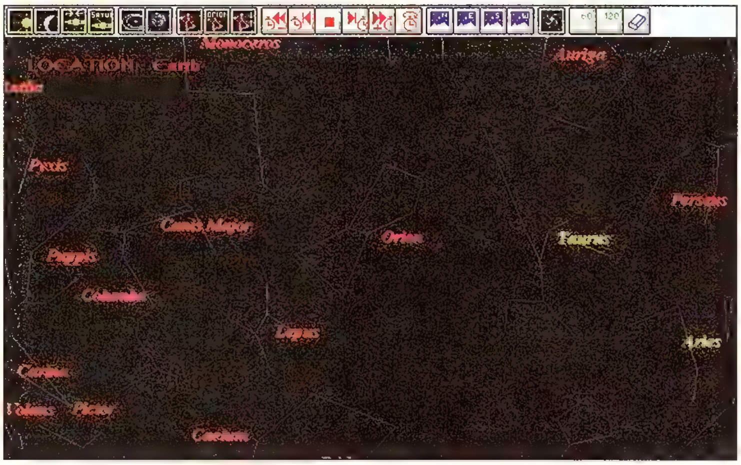
There are many features that will delight the casual user, but at a suggested retail price of $99.95 they probably won't be delighted enough. But serious astronomers, advanced high school and college students, and dedicated star-gazing enthusiasts will be able to make good use of this program.

—Marianne Cotter

The Navigator is a point-and-click tool for moving through space.


date : Nov. 11, 1980 AD, 4:00:00 pm
Alt : 15°00' Az : 00°00'
field : 90.00°

File View Planets Stars, etc. Info Extras
Navigator
LOCATION Earth
Mercury
Venus
Earth
Mars
Jupiter
Saturn
Uranus
Neptune
Pluto
Sun
Moon
other...
hover...
OK
Cancer
Earth : Space Home
planets...
lines/names
constellations
date/time...
find...
OK
help
LST 18 15
Start
Microsoft Word - SUNS.D...
WinCapture
First Light 1.0, July 1...
4:15 PM


LOCATION Earth
Monoceros
Auriga
Pyxis
Perseus
Canis Major
Orion
Taurus
Puppis
Columba
Lepus
Aries
Carina
Volans
Pictor
Caelum

The constellations can be viewed from any angle. This view has Orion at the center.

Presentation 2:00 TODAY
Conference Room at 4:30

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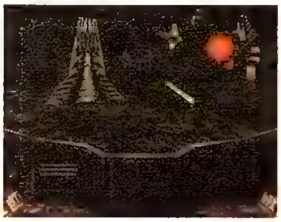

Your "In Box" is piled so high it's been declared a fire hazard. Who cares? With Shockwave™ Assault, the first ground-level action shooter native for Windows® 95, you're busy saving the earth. Las Vegas. Hollywood. London. Egypt. And other real-world locations are at risk of being swallowed by hostile alien forces. Luckily, Shockwave Assault is fully auto play. So you just load the CD and go. Blast away with arcade-style graphics and action. It's your job to save the world. Which beats the hell out of whatever you do now.

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Product Information Number 124

Greatest Moments of the 20th Century

Virtual banality

WINDOWS
$29.95
CD Titles, Inc.
(800) 494-2268
(617) 494-5330

PROS
Transcendent inanity

CONS
Poor video; incomplete and sometimes inaccurate text

RATING ●

Just when I started thinking CD-ROMs had outgrown the novelty phase, an execrable program with a big title like *Greatest Moments of the 20th Century* weaseled its way onto my drive.

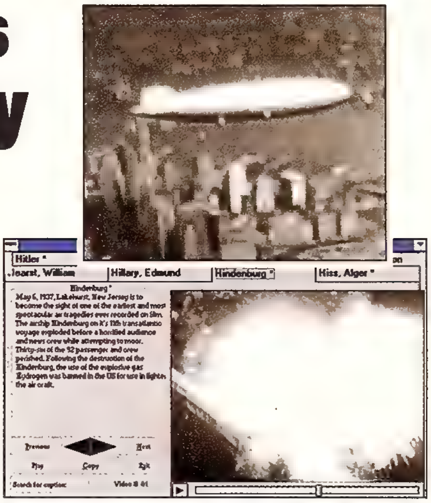
And what about those "greatest moments"? All of the clips are in black and white; the most recent are from the early seventies (Nixon goes to China). The sound files occasionally end in the middle of a word. And the author of the text that accompanies the videos has the misfortune of believing that *it's* is the possessive of *it* and that "a peaceful slumber came to Mr. and Mrs. America" when they learned that Nike missiles would defend them against the Russkies. (Was that "Nike" or "NyQuil"?) Yet the writer deserves some compassion because, in at least two cases, the text was cut off with no scrollbar for the text window.

Greatest Moments captures the first successful expedition to the top of Mt. Everest.

Admittedly, there are a few moments of delight amid the newsreel hokiness and manufactured "historicalness." A few seconds of Josephine Baker dancing stands out, as does the footage of Rommel lowering his binoculars, raising his cigarette to his lips, inhaling, raising his binoculars, and doing it all over again as the clip loops. ("Wow," said a friend observing over my shoulder as I ran through this title, "it's CD-Rommel.")

Greatest Moments of the 20th Century was an attempt to capture some of the finer aspects of history on CD-ROM—an honorable effort despite its shortcomings. Expanding this to a satisfying, complete experience is a project that all CD-ROM developers will surely aspire to, especially now that they have such a fine example of what to avoid.

—Gregory Lynch



Hindenburg *
May 6, 1937, Lakehurst, New Jersey is to become the sight of one of the earliest and most spectacular air tragedies ever recorded on film. The airship Hindenburg on it's 11th transatlantic voyage exploded before a horrified audience and news crew while attempting to moor. Thirty-six of the 92 passenger and crew perished. Following the destruction of the Hindenburg, the use of the explosive gas Hydrogen was banned in the US for use in lighter the air craft.

Like the Hindenburg, _Greatest Moments of the 20th Century_ is sure to be remembered for its fate rather than its accomplishments.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS...

Steven Anzovin, contributing editor, is also on the staff of *Art in America*. He is the author of 22 books, including 3 on Macintosh multimedia.

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Bernie Yee has written about computer games since the days of the TRS-80. He is a contributing editor to *Next Generation*, a *CD-ROM Today* sister publication.

Jeffrey Adam Young is a CD-ROM hound and a freelance writer in Venice, California.

Encyclopedia of U.S. Postage Stamps

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PROS
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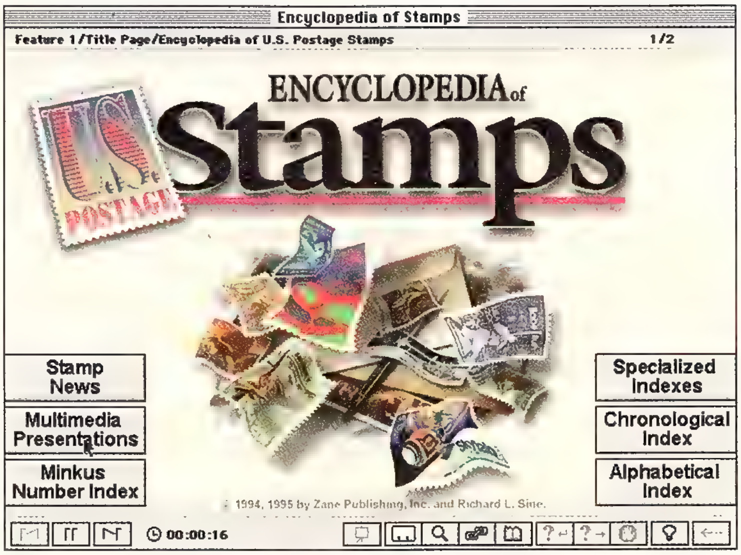
CONS
You can't search for a stamp by year or date of issue

RATING ● ● ● ●

The expression "pretty as a picture" takes on new meaning with Zane Publishing's recent update of *Encyclopedia of U.S. Postage Stamps.*

This enterprising title combines detailed stamp news compiled by philatelic expert Richard Sine with several narrated audio-visual presentations. It also provides push-button access to information on the more than 2,600 face-different stamp designs issued by the U.S. Postal Service since 1847 (the first year of issue) through 1995.

Postage stamp data screens identify a stamp's issue date, series, denomination, catalog number, stamp print method, and color. A numeric listing enables collectors to identify particular stamps and differentiate among similar stamps released in different years.



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Encyclopedia of U.S. Postage Stamps **is packed with detailed information about U.S. stamps issued from 1847 to 1995.**

In addition to narrated articles and full-color stamp images, there's information on unique stamps and misprints, plus an interactive glossary. A series of quizzes presents multiple-choice questions that test mastery of facts presented in the encyclopedia. You decide whether test questions take a general or focused approach. Quiz topics cover stamps of particular historic periods, famous people, inventors and inventions, landmarks, and more.

Even novice computer users will find the encyclopedia's interface quite friendly. You begin by watching a narrated multi-chapter "Feature Presentation" that plays at start-up. Screens advance automatically, but you can pause the presentation at any time to investigate cross-references, data links, and particular stamp issues.

The main presentation also examines such topics as What's New in Stamp Collecting and Misprints, Imperfections, and Errors. Text from this presentation (and other encyclopedia articles) may be printed or copied to the Clipboard for use with another application.

Stamps organizes information in ways that both novice and veteran stamp collectors will find helpful.

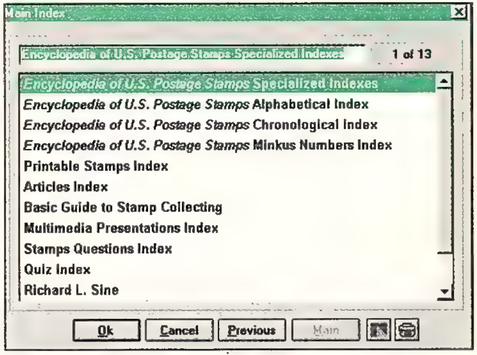
Topical indices simplify information access. A Find Word command lets you search the disc for any word in a presentation (but not the stamp database). On the down side, the program does not support multiple word searches or Boolean operators.

You can't initiate a search for postage stamps released in a specific year or range of years.

Stamp collecting is a hobby enjoyed by over 21 million people in the United States. *Encyclopedia of U.S. Postage Stamps* offers more than just a fact-laden catalog containing thousands of stamp listings. Its narrated articles, colorful illustrations, and detailed stamp database offer a unique multimedia perspective any philatelist is sure to appreciate.

As an added bonus, the CD-ROM includes information about the Electronic Stamp Club on CompuServe. And when installed and activated, an optional stamp encyclopedia screen saver will randomly display 2,600 stamps from the disc.

— Carol S. Holzberg



Encyclopedia of U.S. Postage Stamps Specialized Indexes — 1 of 13

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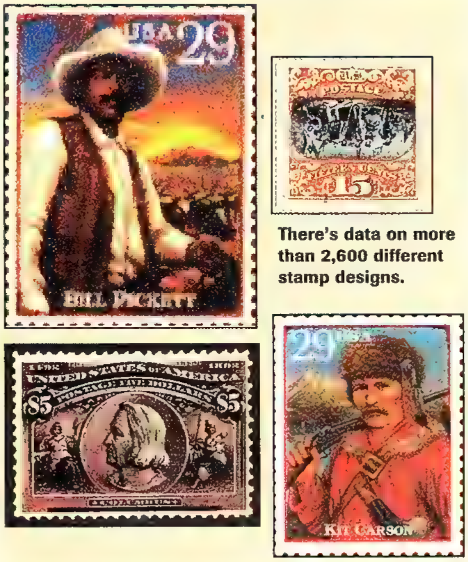
- Printable Stamps Index
- Articles Index
- Basic Guide to Stamp Collecting
- Multimedia Presentations Index
- Stamps Questions Index
- Quiz Index
- Richard L. Sine

This encyclopedia's numerous topical indexes facilitate quick information retrieval.

MAIL BONDING



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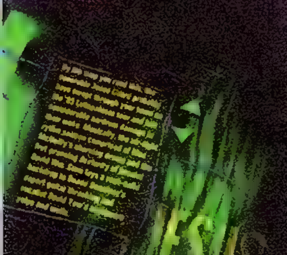

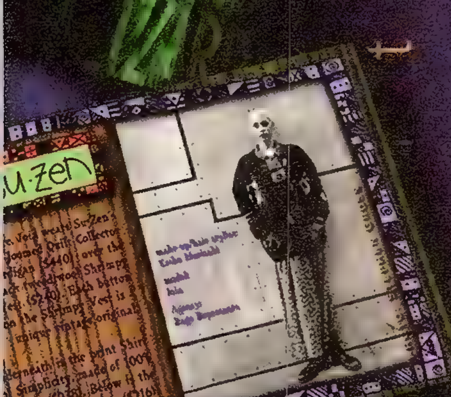

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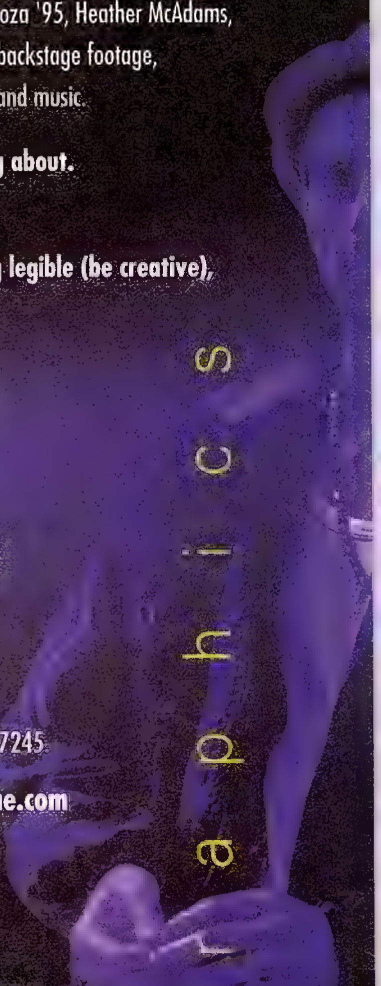

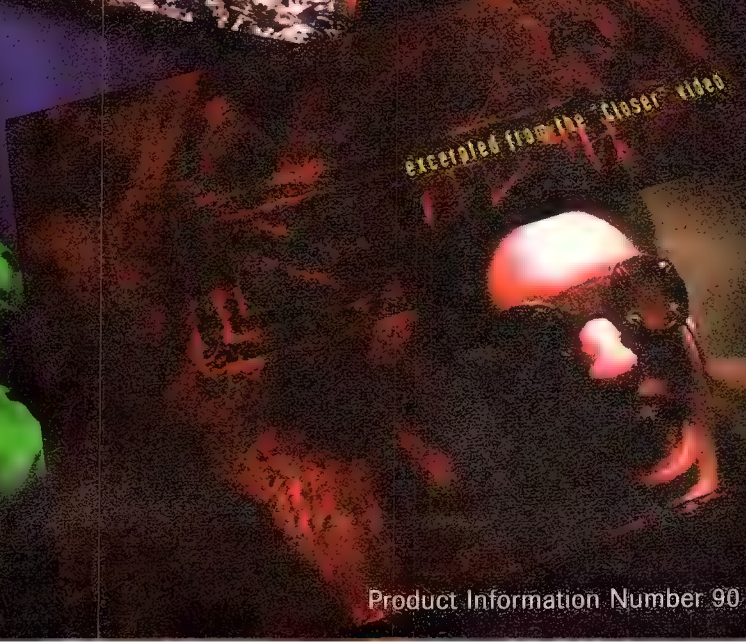
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Product Information Number 90

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PROS
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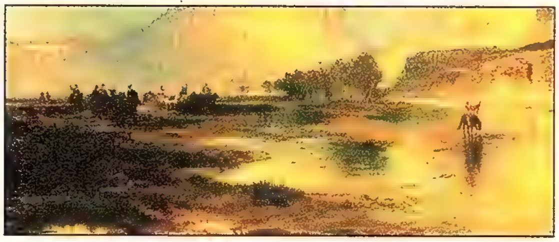
CONS
Low level of interactivity; no hypertext linking or search capabilities

RATING ● ● ◐

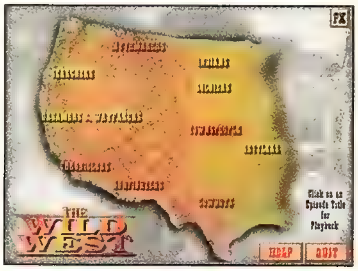
Based on the popular television documentary series of the same name, *The Wild West* is a macroscopic look at 30 dusty years of American history that entertains as it educates.

Adorned with few bells and whistles, the meat of this two CD-ROM set is the documentary footage that seemingly takes five hours to sit through. As documentaries go, this one manages to stay afloat with a balance of over 30 celebrity voice-overs and numerous interviews with cultural historians. The surprising cameo voices include: Helen Hunt, Lyle Lovett, Adrienne Barbeau, and Jack Lemmon, who serves as the narrator.


Paintings and photographs lend an old-school documentary feel to this disc.

Largely a linear experience, *The Wild West* splits the television series into 10 thematic episodes. Once into a particular theme, you play a passive observer rather than an active participant, as a virtual projector spits out slide after slide of mustache-wearing, whiskey-drinking explorers.

Extras include a game of hangman that features trivia questions relating directly to the documentary. However, it doesn't take into account how much of the documentary footage you've accessed, making it nearly impossible to win without viewing the entire footage of both discs. A timeline function provides a helpful basic framework, but the Maps section features fuzzy still frames of video footage that are of little use.



Select an episode title to launch an endless slide show on that topic.

I did learn the difference between a Gunfighter and a Gun-Man—the prior being a law abiding gun-toter, the latter used his gun for criminal acts. But there wasn't much here that couldn't be enjoyed in its television format, which is about $60 less expensive.

—*Jeffrey Adam Young*

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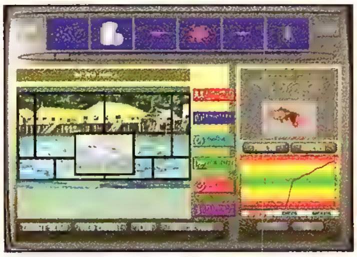
The Nature Collector: Freshwater Fish

see it on the Disc!

Just call it "Sim Aquarium"

If slow and steady is your pace, you might be interested in casting a line for *Freshwater Fish*. As a freelance collector working for a variety of museums, your job is to travel the world and capture rare species of fish. You also design the exhibits in which these creatures will be displayed, and you care for them while they're in captivity.

The museum monitors management and evaluates your performance. The more popular your exhibits, the more points you earn. The more points you earn, the better your chance of becoming curator.


This screen shows how your fish are faring.

Be warned: These fragile beauties live in microclimate habitats that only Mother Nature could perfect. You'll have your work cut out for you trying to replicate the precise conditions they need in order to flourish.

Navigating the program's menus is point-and-click easy. Catching fish, on the other hand, can be a bit frustrating. You can choose from a number of traps, ranging from boxes and nets to an immobilizing spray. The difficult part of this exercise is placing the bait in the trap. The simulation of movement underwater is almost too effective: I had to struggle to move the bait around. In fact, I nearly got a friction burn on my wrist from dragging the mouse so hard.

In *Freshwater*, you must save the fish, not eat them.

Your success as a collector depends on patience, observation, and understanding what fish need. Fail to keep notes on what you learn and your fish will go belly-up before you can say "tartar sauce." Catching fish is tedious, but ultimately worthwhile: A well-designed habitat filled with gleaming, healthy fish is fun to sit back and watch.

— *Marta Bright*

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PROS
Gorgeous 3D graphics and smooth animation that can be quite soothing

CONS
Not sufficiently engaging over the long term

RATING ● ● ●

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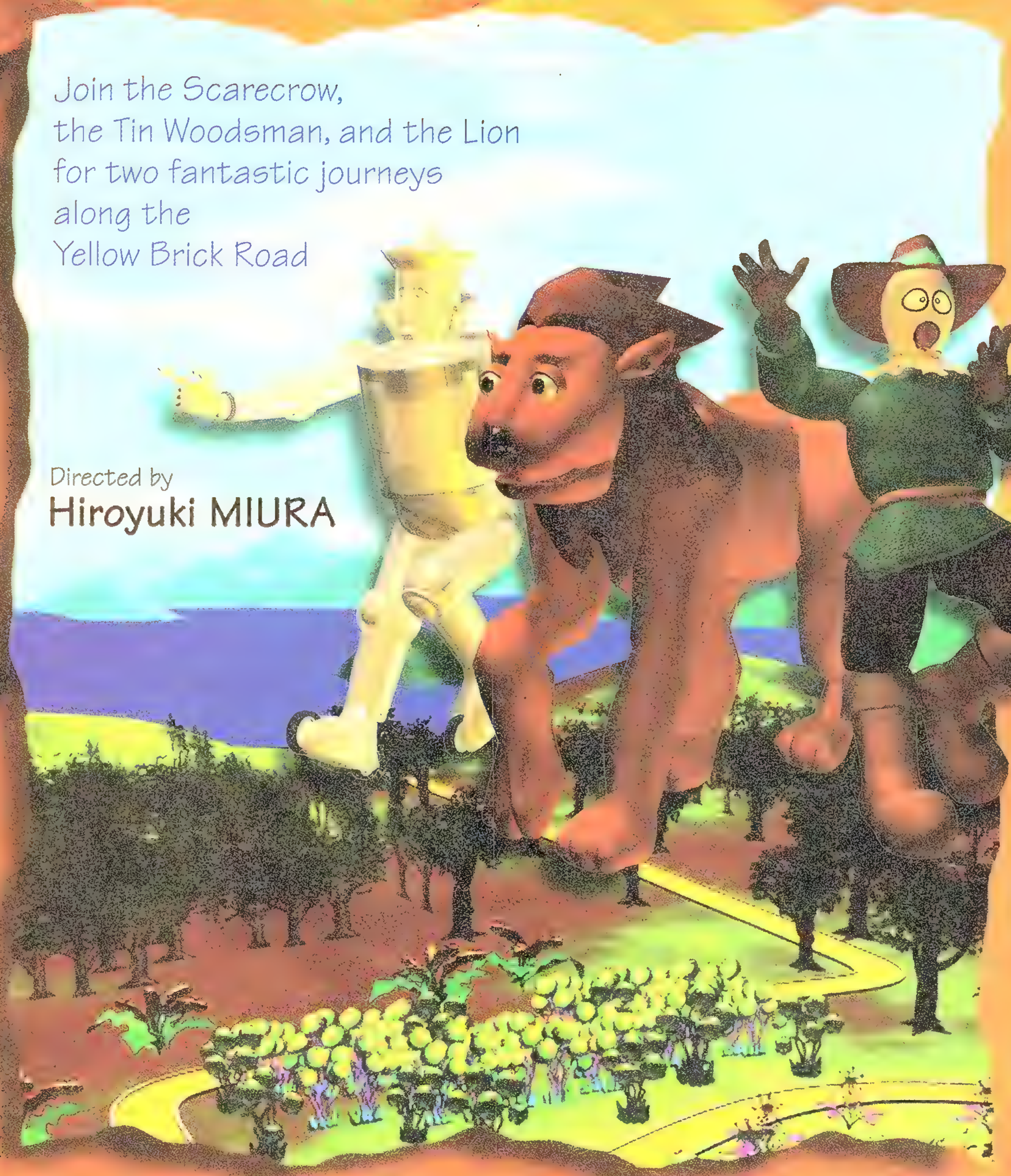

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A good product that should have had more depth

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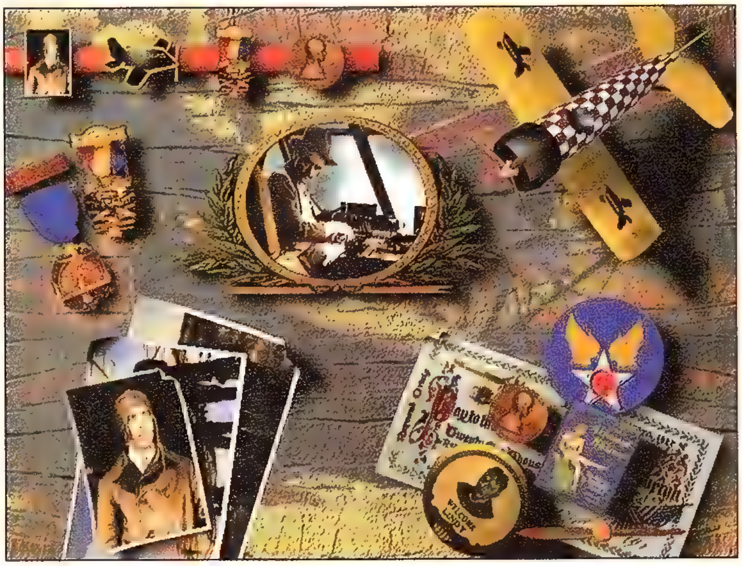
PROS
Elegant design; a fair amount of information

CONS
Failure to maximize museum's resources

RATING ● ● ● ◐



The main menu gives you access to all of the subjects covered in *Dreams of Flight*.

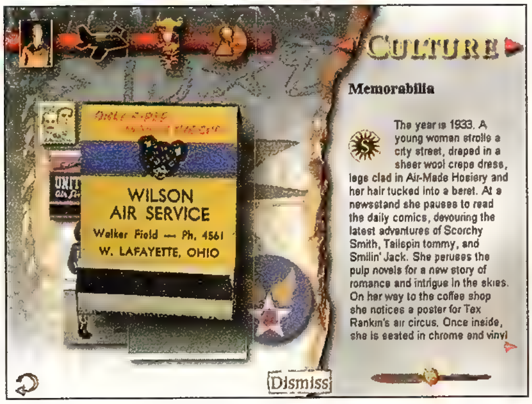
Few tourists make a pleasure trip to our nation's capital without stopping at its most popular museum—The Smithsonian Museum of Air and Space. Whether it's because of our childlike wonder about flight or out of an insatiable curiosity to explore the museum's far-reaching collection, we are drawn to learn more about the history of flying machines.

After a dozen trips there, I still find things I've never seen before, ranging from the first dreams of flight to the depths of outer space. That's why the *Air & Space Smithsonian Dreams of Flight* CD-ROM is somewhat of a disappointment. This elegant, well-designed multimedia history of flight and fliers has all the recommend features in regard to ease of use, presentation, and scope. But the designers failed to maximize the museum's resources or provide great depth in information. If they had, they would have made this title soar.

That's not to say they didn't draw on the full capabilities of multimedia. Surprisingly, the numerous audio and video clips, photographs, drawings, and hot spots are all well integrated into the whole presentation of data, putting a fair amount of information within convenient reach. The central clearinghouse for this information is a visual menu based around the subjects Pioneers, Milestones, Culture, and Flying Machines. An icon bar and simple search feature make finding key words or people quite easy.

The subjects are covered in varying degrees of depth, with the Personalities section claiming the lion's share of information. Biographies of many major figures of flight are handled in a moderate degree of depth, accompanied by a well-balanced and professionally executed blend of narration, text, pictures, and often archival film clips.

You can find information about famous aircraft (such as the Wright Brothers' Flyer) in the Flying Machines section; the societal impact of flying in various sectors of the media, such as movies, comic books, and stamps highlight the Culture section. A meager and poorly organized timeline makes the Milestones section far less useful than it should have been. However, a clever Autopilot mode runs preprogrammed documentaries on a variety of subjects, such as Women in Flight, and strings the CD-ROM's resources together quite well. You can also program your own multimedia documentaries.

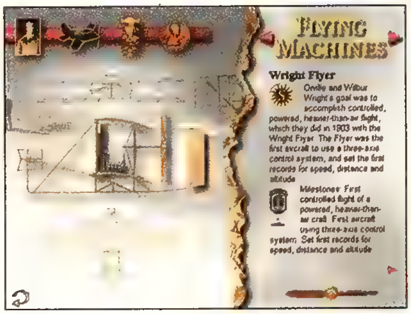


Memorabilia

The year is 1933. A young woman strolls a city street, draped in a sheer wool crepe dress, legs clad in Air-Made Hosiery and her hair tucked into a beret. At a newsstand she pauses to read the daily comics, devouring the latest adventures of Scorchy Smith, Tailspin tommy, and Smilin' Jack. She peruses the pulp novels for a new story of romance and intrigue in the skies. On her way to the coffee shop she notices a poster for Tex Rankin's air circus. Once inside, she is seated in chrome and vinyl

Matchbooks, postcards, movies, stamps, and other Flight Culture illustrate how fascinated people are with flight.

Dreams of Flight is a handsome title with a reasonable amount of information and lovely presentation. However, it missed some obvious opportunities. Potentially brilliant features such as an interactive tour of the museum or even a more complete history of flight would have elevated this reference title to grander heights.



Wright Flyer

Orville and Wilbur Wright's goal was to accomplish controlled, powered, heavier-than-air flight, which they did in 1903 with the Wright Flyer. The Flyer was the first aircraft to use a three-axis control system, and set the first records for speed, distance and altitude

Milestones: First controlled flight of a powered, heavier-than-air craft. First aircraft using three-axis control system. Set first records for speed, distance and altitude

The stories of famous planes can be found in Flying Machines.

At the very least, there should have been more text, archival material, photographs of Air and Space exhibits, plans, diagrams, and/or multimedia clips. In addition to the failure to maximize the presentation, there are some major gaps in the information itself. Subjects such as flight in warfare and aeronautic pioneers like Da Vinci are only touched on, if mentioned at all. A rather unimpressive flight simulation rounds out this title that looks great on the runway, but never really takes off.

— T. Liam McDonald

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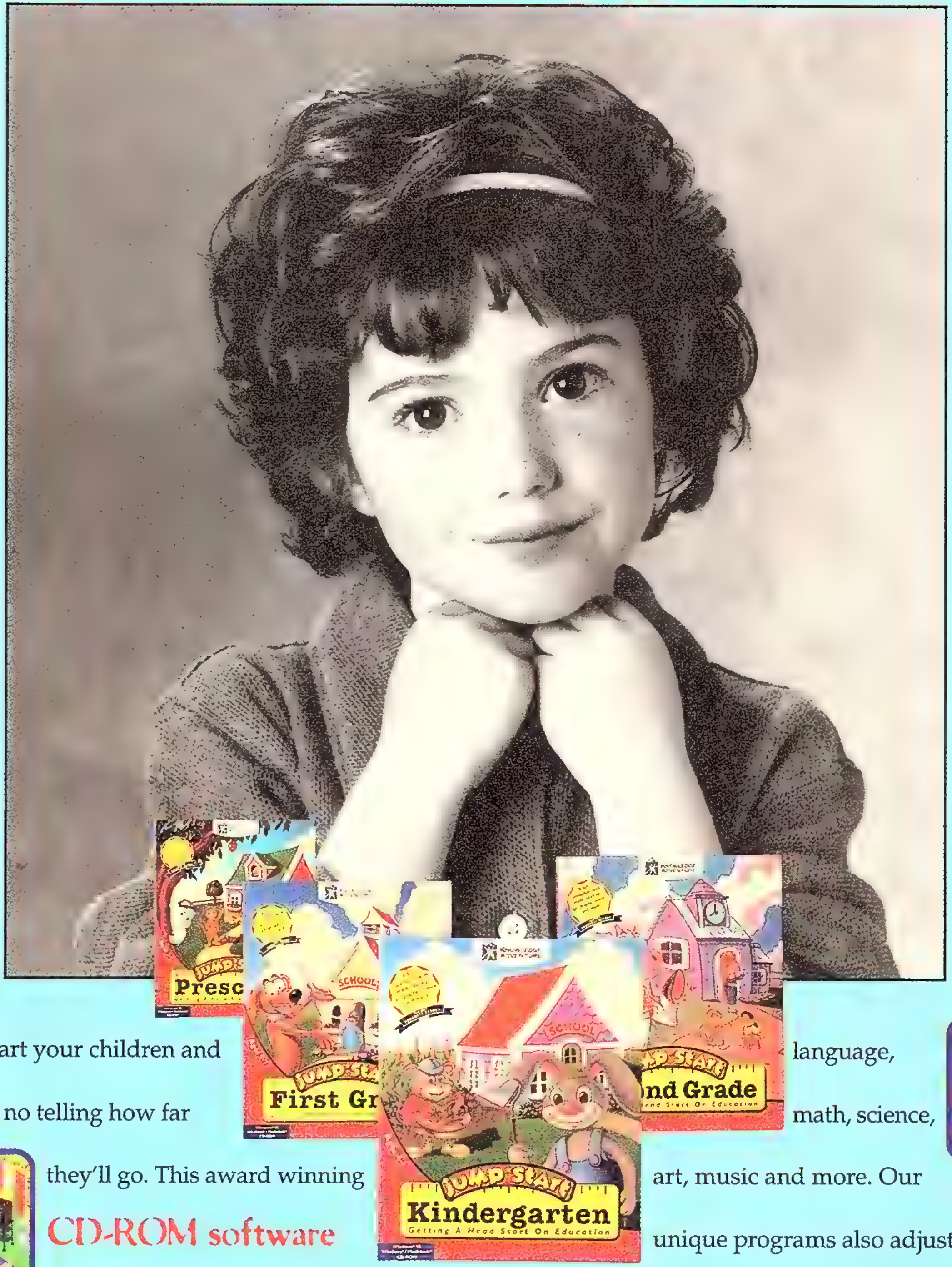

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PROS
A well-integrated multimedia powerhouse

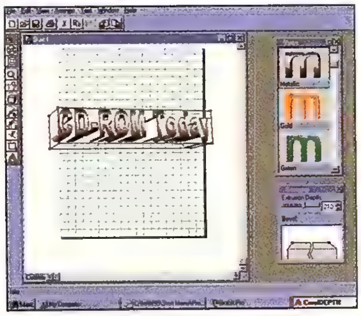
CONS
Needs a lot of computer power and resources

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

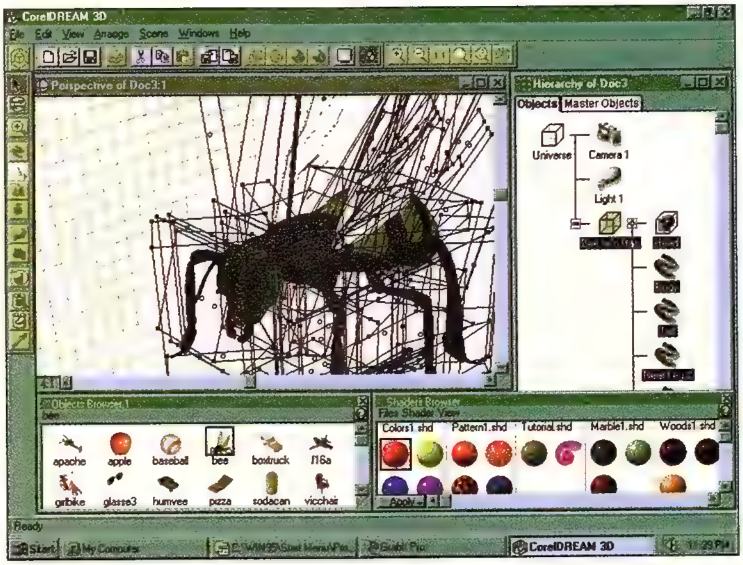
If it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? The favorite graphic suite of thousands of satisfied *Corel Draw 5* users was definitely not broken. However, Corel didn't climb to the top of the graphics world by resting on its laurels, and when the opportunity presented itself to be first out of the gate with a sophisticated graphics suite for Windows 95, Corel made the most of it.

If you're a fan of this program, don't panic: *Corel Draw* is all that it was before—and much more. Not only have the best features of the *Corel* interface been retained, the functionality of that interface has been extended across the rest of the suite; jumping from one application to another is now nearly effortless.

There's more than just a refined interface, however; *Corel Draw* itself boasts several new features designed to make drawing with a computer the intuitive process it is with natural media. The Wireframe Lens, for example, lets you work with complex designs quickly, while the Eraser lets you do something you couldn't do before in *Corel Draw*—erase parts of a vector-based drawing. The Polygon tool makes quick work of designing complex polygonal shapes, something that wasn't always simple or quick in older versions of *Corel Draw*. The Distribute command duplicates objects without causing cramps in your left hand from continually pressing Control-D. And for those who need high-quality output for publishing, the already high standards of *Corel Draw*'s layering, separation, and color mapping abilities have been raised even further.



Corel Depth revitalizes tired fonts, giving them a strong presence whether your final product is designed for the screen or the printed page.


CorelDREAM 3D
File Edit View Arrange Scene Windows Help
Perspective of Doc3:1
Hierarchy of Doc3
Objects Master Objects
Universe
Camera 1
Light 1
Objects Browser 1
apache apple baseball bee bostruck f16a
girbike glasse3 humvee pizza sodacan vicchair
Shaders Browser
Colors1.shd Pattern1.shd Tutorial.shd Marble1.shd Woods1.shd
Apply
Ready
Start
CorelDREAM 3D

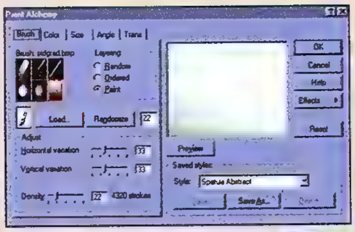
Corel Dream 3D comes with some powerful three-dimensional drawing tools.

As for the rest of the suite, Corel Photo-Paint is about the only module left from earlier versions, and it has undergone so many improvements that it will give *Adobe Photoshop* a run for the money. The Show and Move modules have been replaced by the integrated presentation program Corel Presents. Mosaic has been dropped.

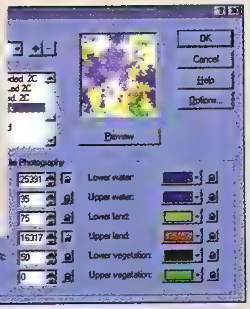
Corel Motion 3D is a new three-dimensional animation module designed by Specular (known for its own Infini-D animation product). Corel Dream 3D, its companion rendering program, is a licensed version of Ray Dream Designer. Corel Depth is a neat little program that lets you apply textures to fonts, much like Pixar's *Typestry* program. These programs are state-of-the-art, both in their capabilities and their ease of use. Great stuff!

As with any "new and improved" product, it's bound to include a few features that might be considered steps backward. One that caused me a bit of artistic anguish is the way *Corel Draw* handles its popular roll-up menus. Previously, you could open several of these at once and let them float around the workspace. Now there's only one roll-up for most of the effects, with a tree diagram that lets you scroll down and pick a particular effect. This makes it harder to use one effect in conjunction with another.

PICTURE PERFECT


Paint Alchemy
Brush Color Size Angle Trans
Layering
Random
Ordered
Paint
Load... Randomize
Horizontal variation
Vertical variation
Density
Preview
Saved styles
Style: Sponge Abstract
Save As...
OK
Cancel
Help
Effects
Reset

▲ Photo-Paint's great image manipulation tools include Alchemy, which can endow the most mundane photograph with artistic flair.


OK
Cancel
Help
Options...
Preview
Lower water
Upper water
Lower land
Upper land
Lower vegetation
Upper vegetation
Cloud softness
Brightness

▲ Cap your efforts with some breathtaking fills, from smooth gradients to exciting bitmapped creations.

Corel Draw 6 has plenty of new features to appreciate, but you might have to beef up your system to take advantage of them. The program requires 16MB of RAM and a whopping 160MB of hard disk space for a full installation.

Other than heavy system requirements, you can't go wrong with this latest release. Even if price is no object, it can stand toe to toe with the most sophisticated dedicated drawing and painting programs. Factor in price, plus all the other goodies Corel throws in (from great utilities to tons of clip art, photos, and fonts), and nothing can touch it.

—Gary Meredith

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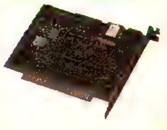

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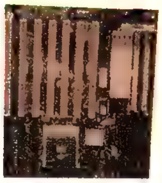

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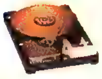

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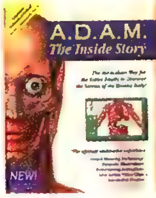

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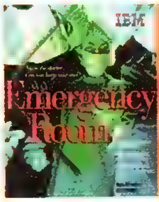

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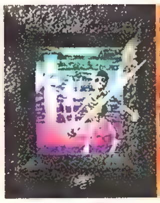

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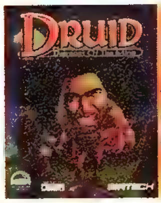

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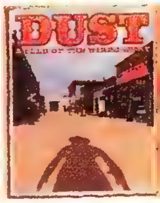

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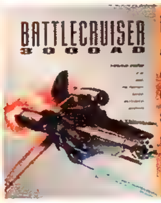

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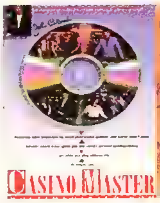

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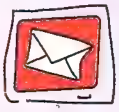

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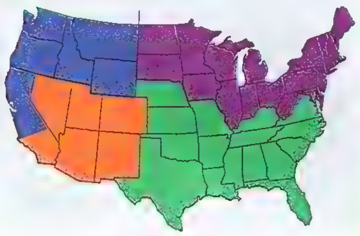

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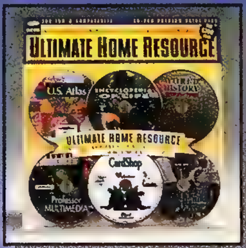

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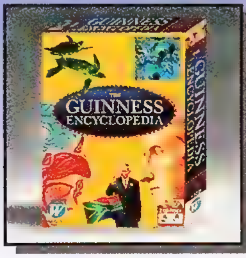

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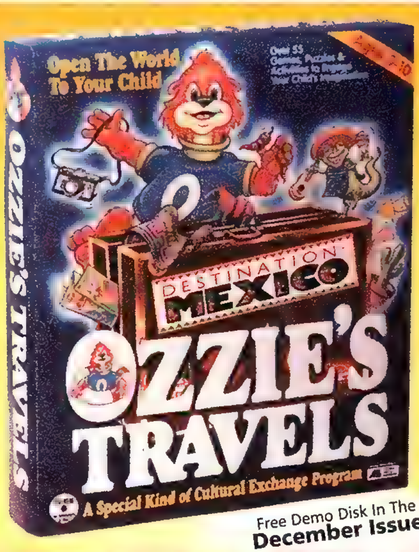
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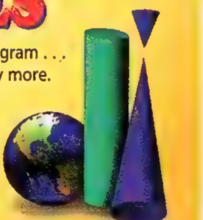

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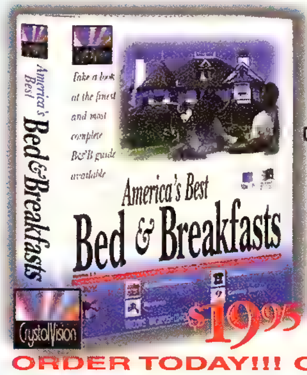
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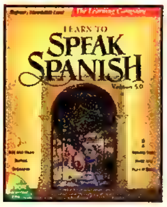

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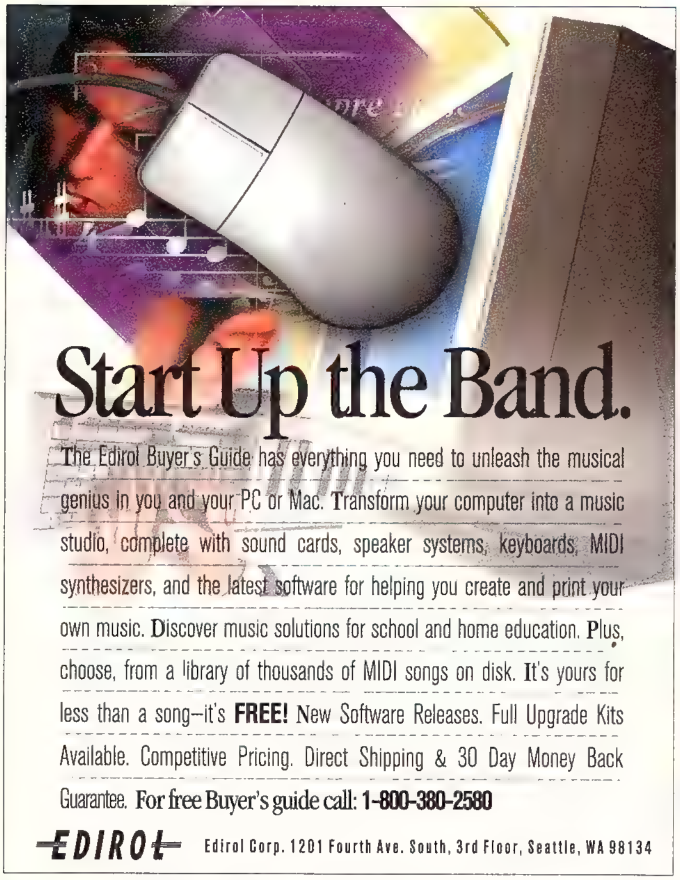
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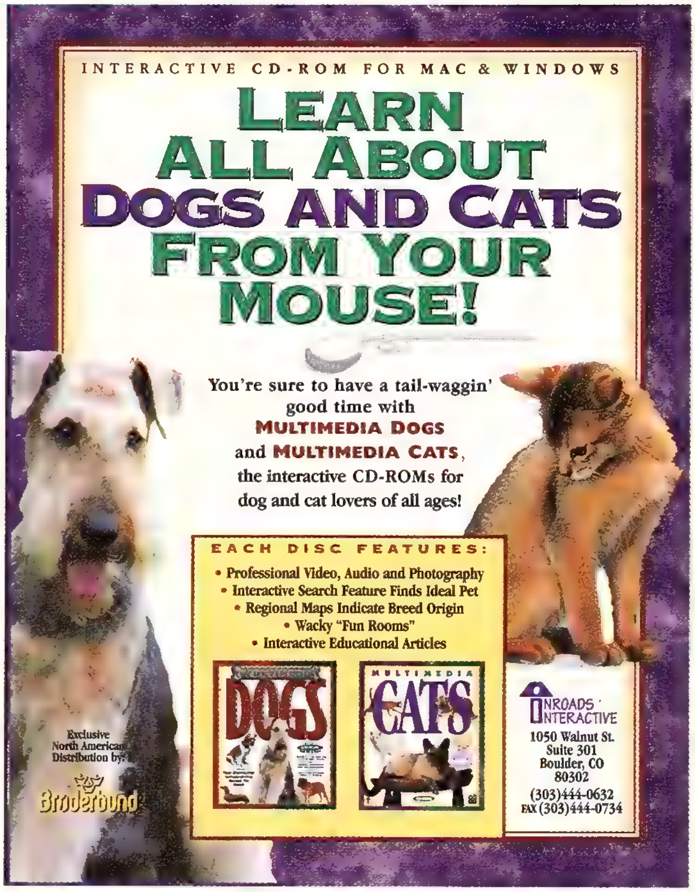
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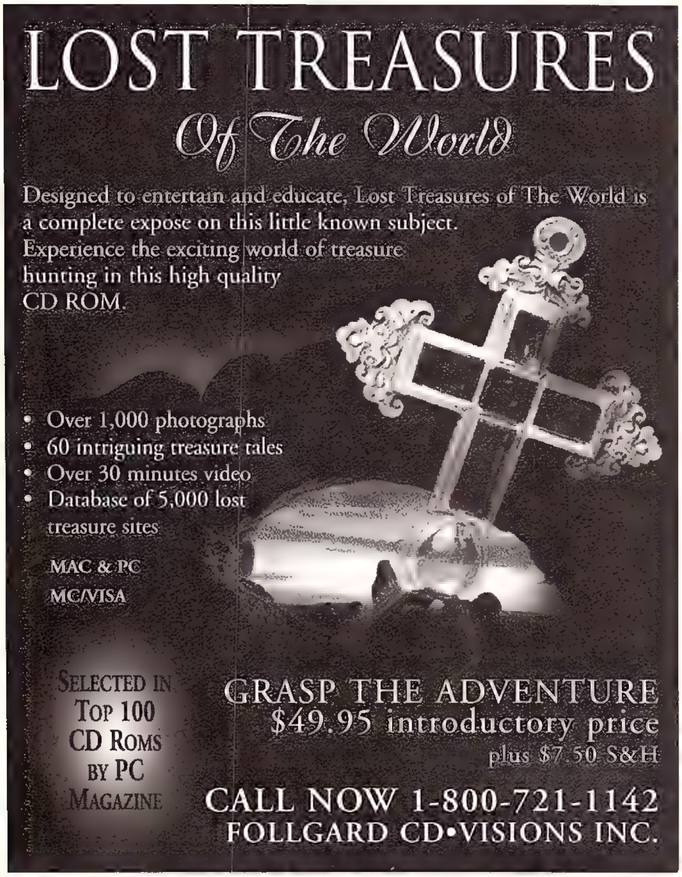
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Tom R. Halfhill

Why I Bought a *Mac*

The Mac fits my needs and I'm comfortable with it. Isn't that what this stuff is all about?

It was neither perversity nor irony that motivated me to buy a new Macintosh the same week Microsoft unleashed Windows 95 upon the world. All I was trying to do was practice what I preach.

True, I felt like an endangered salmon swimming upstream against an overpowering current. While hordes of Windows shoppers were crowding into computer stores at one minute past midnight on August 24, I was at home setting up my new Mac, which definitely does not run the world's most famous operating system.

Sacrilege? Foolishness? Contrariness? None of the above. I was only following the advice I frequently give to others: Buy the computer that best fits your needs and that you're the most comfortable with.

For me, this time around, it turned out to be a Macintosh. And I'm going to explain why for two reasons: Some of you may be wrestling with a similar decision, and I know from years of perusing reader mail that some people treat personal computing like a holy war.

Looking for a new computer? It may be time for a Big Mac Attack.

For the record, my latest computer is the seventh I've purchased since 1981. I've owned an Atari 800, a Commodore Amiga 1000, an Atari 1040ST, a Zenith PC, and a Tandy Model 100. At work, I've used just about every computer you've heard of and some you probably haven't. (Remember the Commodore PET? Coleco Adam? Mattel Aquarius?) I've used IBM PCs and compatibles since 1983 and Macs since 1984. If computing is a religion, I'm about as ecumenical as you can get.

In 1992, I bought my first Mac: an LC II. Why? For one thing, I'd never owned a Mac before, so I figured it was Apple's turn. More seriously, I wanted to do programming on the Mac so I could learn more about its operating system. Also, I have a PC at work, so I wanted a different machine at home. This is exactly the opposite of how most people think, but moving back and forth between Macs and PCs is so easy nowadays that there's no reason not to own the home computer you really want, no matter what you've got at the office.

To my surprise, I was happier with my LC II than I'd been with any computer since my original Atari 800. It was fun to use, it almost never crashed, and I rarely had trouble installing new hardware and software. I became convinced that I was more productive on my Mac than I was on my PC at the office.

For three years the LC II continued to serve my needs, with one important exception: It wasn't fast enough to run the latest multimedia software. No surprise there. In PC terms, an LC II is roughly equivalent to a 16-MHz 386SX. To its credit, the machine never failed to run anything I installed, but multimedia stuff was pretty sluggish. To keep up with the latest CD-ROM software, it was time to get something faster.

Now get ready for another surprise. I didn't buy a Power Mac. Normally, I'd advise anyone buying a new Mac to get a Power Mac, because PowerPC is the future of the Macintosh platform. But I had other factors to consider.

Last winter I suffered repetitive stress injuries to both of my wrists while working at my day job. Although I'm recovering, it's a slow and painful process. I must carefully ration my typing, and work gets top priority. Why spend $2,000 on a new home computer that I can use only a few hours a week?

So when I found a blowout deal on a discontinued Performa 636CD, I jumped on it. For $999, I got a Mac that's about ten times faster than my LC II and runs multimedia software just fine. Later, if I wish, I can upgrade it with a PowerPC board for under $700. It's fun to use, it hasn't crashed (so far), and I haven't had any trouble installing my hardware and software. In other words, it fits my needs and I'm comfortable with it. Isn't that what this stuff is all about?

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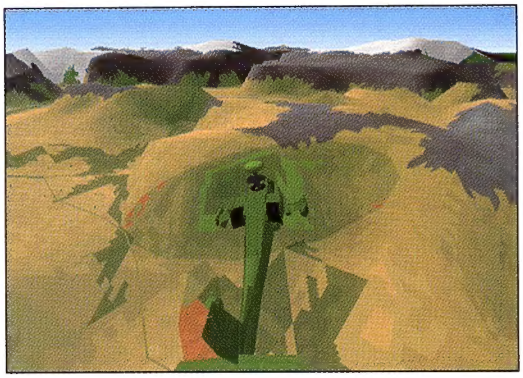

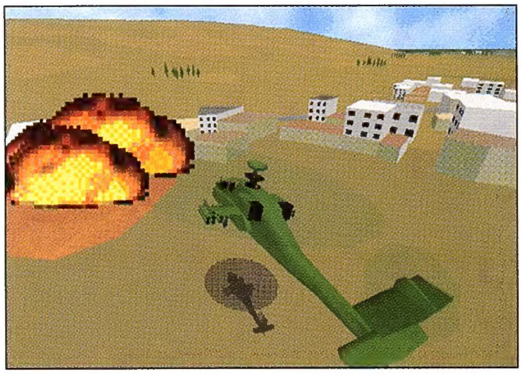

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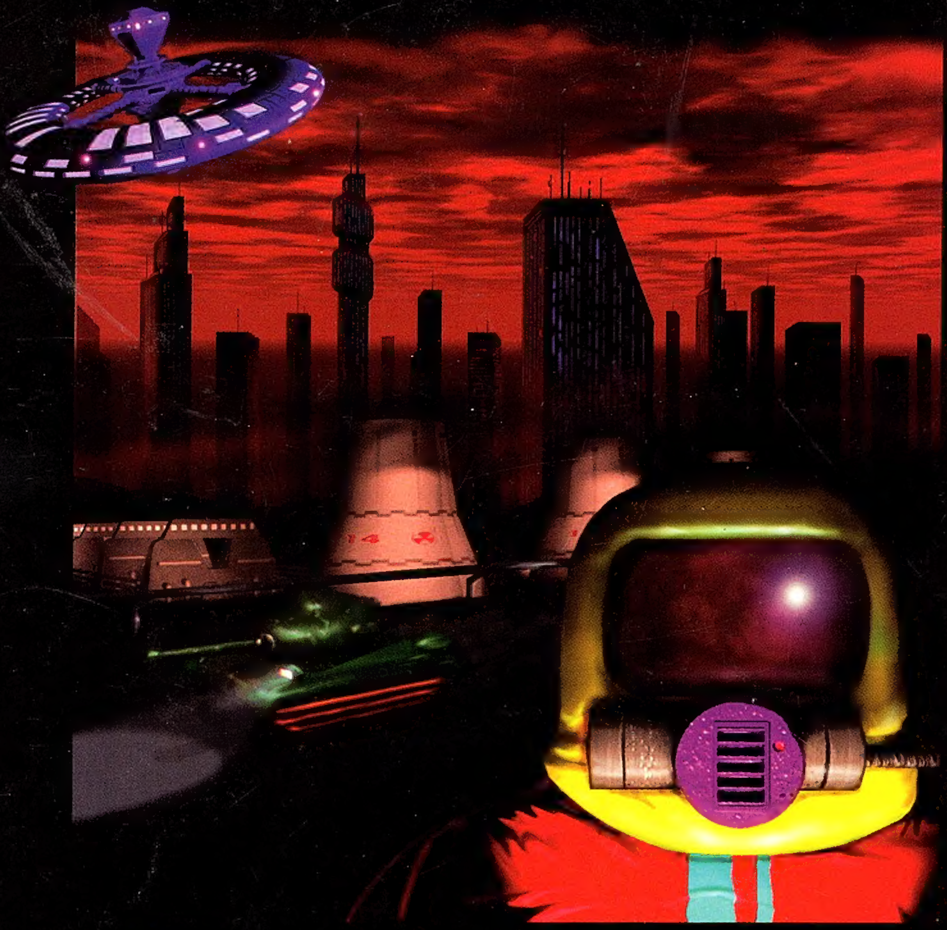

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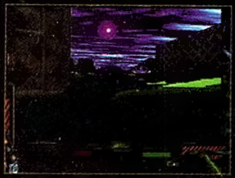

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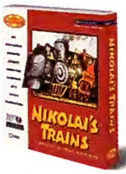

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